

S6@Uni: Helping students make the transition from school to University



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Introduction

The S6@Uni Programme converts current on-campus undergraduate science courses into online courses. These courses are delivered into Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Schools to complement the curriculum of pupils in the Senior Phase of their education. The original aim of the programme was to allow students in the remote North and East of Scotland access to the teaching of the University of Aberdeen. Now established, however, the programme is proving to have multiple applications in the fields of widening access, School-University transition, and retention. The project allows pupils to experience the different teaching and assessment styles which they will encounter at University whilst still in a "safe" School and "supported" University environment.

The S6@Uni Programme

The S6@Uni Programme consists of:

- Core Degree level 1 science courses
- Online courses
- Lecture Streaming
- Virtual classrooms
- On campus Practical weekends

Example curricula can be seen below.

Degree Intention	Course choice 1 (Sept – Dec)	Course choice 2 (Jan – May)
Chemistry/ Medicine	Chemistry for the Physical Sciences I	Chemistry for the Physical Sciences 2
Computing Science	Computer Programming & Principles	Computer Architecture
Geology	Dynamic Planet	Portrait of a Planet/ Astronomy & Meteorology
Physics	The Physical Universe A	Astronomy & Meteorology

Our S6@Uni students continue to achieve grades comparable, or even higher, than our first year cohort showing the high levels of commitment of these pupils. Pupils go on to received offers from our own and other Scottish Universities. While no comment can be made about other institutions, within our own institution successful completion of courses contributed to the strength of a student's application and in some cases made the difference between an offer being given and not

Outcomes: Student Viewpoint

"good opportunity to gain university experience and get used to the lecture style of teaching before going away to university the next year. Also, it gives you a unique extra thing on your application for university, putting you ahead of many other prospective students."



Photograph ©Simon Price

It's a bit different from what we get here (at school), because there (at University) they give you the freedom of doing it yourself rather than holding your hand

It definitely helped doing one course before arriving it made it less stressful during exam time!

Outcomes: School Viewpoint

Feedback from our principle partner school report that over the past four years this strategy, in combination with others, has resulted in increased:

- S6 stay on rates (41% in 2009, 52% in 2012)
- S6 5+ Higher Grade attainment (27% in 2009, 35% in 2012)
- S6 1+ Advanced Higher Grade attainment (21% in 2009, 26% in 2012)

Outcomes: Academic Viewpoint

S6@uni students get off to a flying start because they know what to expect in terms of the transition from school learning to university study

The S6 program is a great chance for gifted students to get some experience of University level teaching and life, and prepares them for success when they do go to University