

## University of Aberdeen

### Outcome Agreement – FAQs

**You've probably heard about the University's Outcome Agreement, or perhaps been asked to contribute to it. Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about the Outcome Agreement. If you want to know more please contact Janine Chalmers, Strategic Planning Officer by e-mail [janine.chalmers@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:janine.chalmers@abdn.ac.uk) or by telephone 01224 272744.**

#### 1. What is an Outcome Agreement?

The Outcome Agreement is a formal agreement between the University and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and sets out what the University plans to deliver in return for the funding it receives from the SFC.

The SFC receives a funding allocation from the Scottish Government to support the delivery of further and higher education in Scotland. The Scottish Government attaches certain conditions to those funds and expects the SFC to meet them through working with the Scottish HE and FE sectors. The SFC allocates the funding across Scotland's Universities and Colleges and requires them to commit to outlining how the funding will be used to pursue Scottish Government strategic priorities such as:

- addressing the issues raised and targets set by the Commission for Widening Access;
- delivering high-quality teaching and learning environments;
- meeting skills gaps and the expectations of industry;
- engaging in impactful and globally competitive research;
- driving knowledge exchange and innovation;
- partnership working across the sector;
- striving to make significant cultural changes in ensuring inclusion, accessibility and equality and;
- reducing Scotland's carbon footprint.

These are some of the areas which should be covered in the University's Outcome Agreement through presenting data and a narrative on progress and actions.

#### 2. Why is the Outcome Agreement important?

The Outcome Agreement is important because it secures funding for the University. It also showcases how the University is meeting Scottish Government and SFC priorities in key areas, such as widening access, equality and diversity, knowledge exchange and skills development.

The Outcome Agreement contributes heavily to the setting of University priorities for the forthcoming year. It also demonstrates the progress the University has made since the previous Outcome Agreement was published.

#### 3. How will the University know what needs to be in the Outcome Agreement?

Every year the SFC produces a guidance document which informs the University of what needs to be covered in the Outcome Agreement: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/outcome-agreements/outcome-agreements-guidance/outcome-agreements-guidance.aspx>

The SFC receives a letter from the Scottish Government which sets out key expectations and priorities. In turn, the SFC then produces guidance for Universities on what should be included in Outcome Agreements in order to assure the SFC that the funding provided is used effectively to meet the strategic expectations of the Scottish Government. The guidance is usually received annually in September and each University then works with an Outcome Agreement Manager at the SFC to negotiate, develop and finally agree its Outcome Agreement.

4. Does the Outcome Agreement affect me?

Yes, the Outcome Agreement affects the whole University community.

It is critical that the Outcome Agreement reflects the breadth of work being undertaken by the University and assures the SFC that the University is progressing on the areas highlighted in the guidance. You may be contacted by the Directorate of Planning to inform the development of the Outcome Agreement, but ultimately all areas of the University will have a contribution to make. SFC funding is largely dependent on a comprehensive Outcome Agreement, and so all staff and students are stakeholders in its development.

5. How is the Outcome Agreement developed at the University?

The Outcome Agreement will be developed by the Directorate of Planning with the Senior Vice-Principal through consultation and conversations with colleagues and students from across the University. This is the University's opportunity to give an overview of the University's forward plan and promote the excellent work achieved by colleagues across the University. This year a senior steering group has been established to oversee and champion its development. The views of students are also required and valued so AUSA will be involved in the development of the document, as will the wider student community.

6. How can I contribute to the Outcome Agreement?

Draft versions of the Outcome Agreement will be available during the development process (between November and April), through the staff e-zine, Communication Champions and other channels. Previous Outcome Agreements can be found on the Directorate of Planning website: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/5689.php>