

SCOTTISH WIDER ACCESS PROGRAMME EAST

SUMMARY OF ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021



SWAP EAST IS A PARTNERSHIP OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE NORTH AND EAST OF SCOTLAND. ALONG WITH THE SWAP WEST CONSORTIUM OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND, SWAP IS A NATIONAL PROGRAMME AIMING TO WIDEN ACCESS AND GIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO ADULTS SEEKING ROUTES INTO UNIVERSITY OR HIGHER NATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT COLLEGE.

Summary of SWAP East's Annual Report

(The link to the full report is at the end of this summary.)

SWAP aims to advance the education of adults in Scotland wishing to return to education, by means of access programmes specifically tailored to enable them to progress onto higher education.

SWAP's aims and objectives focus on 4 key themes: Partnerships, Accessibility, Student Success and Social Justice. Each theme has clearly articulated aims and actions to be achieved and outcomes which will evidence the impact. SWAP is funded by the Scottish Funding Council, through its non-core programme funding stream. SWAP is given outcomes to meet which evidence indicators that these programmes are widening access for adults. SWAP reports to the SFC on these outcomes on an annual basis..



SWAP has been in existence since 1998 and thousands of students have used this route to move onto, and succeed at, universities throughout Scotland.

In the last 7 years, SWAP has seen a year on year increase in the number of adults returning to education and enrolling on SWAP programmes in colleges throughout Scotland. The number of programmes has increased throughout the regions, including new programmes in the north of Scotland. The Scottish Wider Access Programme has grown as a partnership and is now a very significant access route for adults who have been out of education for some time, with few qualifications, seeking routes into higher education.

In 2020/21, just over 900 students enrolled on SWAP East programmes. This showed a significant increase (32%) from the previous year. This figure, combined with SWAP West students, meant that over 2,000 students began an access programme in Scotland in September 2020. The most popular programme was the Access to Nursing programme which accounted for 55% of SWAP East's student intake. Humanities & Arts & Social Sciences and Science & Engineering students made up the remaining 29% & 16% respectively.

In 20/21, 75% of SWAP students successfully completed their access programme. From those who completed, 92% went on to gain a place on a higher education course (85% to university and 7% to HN study). SWAP students received offers from universities throughout Scotland. In the East, Dundee and Edinburgh Napier universities placed the most students, mostly due to the large numbers of nursing applicants. *More detail on where students progressed is in the full report.* In March, SWAP partners shared the 1st year retention data with SWAP to evidence student success. The latest figures on 2019 entrants, showed that 95% of SWAP East students were still at university after 1st year.

Evidence of the success of SWAP's work is measured by widening access performance indicators. In 20/21, the partnership continued to achieve a range of its WA targets. These included the number of

students who are first in family to go to university & the number of students with previous qualifications less than SCQF Level 6. The Gender target (30% males) is becoming a bigger challenge for SWAP due to the large number of access to nursing programmes. The number of SIMD20 students is also an outcome and in 20/21, SWAP was 1% below the 35% target. This target has also become more challenging in the last couple of years because of the development of the north of Scotland programmes and the subsequent increase in the number of students attending SWAP programmes in northern colleges. In 20/21 these students made up 16% of the overall intake but only 6% of SIMD 20 intake. In the north, there are far fewer SIMD designated areas, but the students still face disadvantage including geographical location & lack of school qualifications and must continue to be included in SWAP's aims to widen access.

Throughout the year, SWAP continued to give support, information and guidance to prospective, current and former students, course tutors, university and college partners and other sector organisations. SWAP gave induction talks to all class cohorts, co-ordinated study skills events with university partners, provided materials to help prepare students for moving on to higher education and continued to develop the SWAP East website to ensure that students had the most up to date information on programmes, degree progression opportunities, funding guidance and college and university services.



SWAP also engaged with former students, who gave up their time to work with the SWAP team to give guidance to access students. SWAP continued to co-ordinate a Facebook Peer Support Group as an informal way of facilitating advice between former SWAP students and access students. SWAP also ran Q & A sessions throughout the year. SWAP uses the former

students' voice to inspire and give confidence to other adults who may be looking at ways to move their education forward as a mature student. SWAP student stories can be read [here](#)

To help inform our work, SWAP carried out surveys in 2021 to evaluate both the access student and the 1st year university student experience. These surveys were compiled and the findings reported back to SWAP East partner institutions.

SWAP East's reports on the student experience and 1st year university retention are available from your institution's representative on the SWAP East Executive group, or directly from SWAP, on request.

SWAP uses social media to raise awareness of SWAP programmes.

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Director, SWAP East, December 2021

SWAP East's full Annual Report for 2020/2021 can be read [here](#).