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## Deliverable D4.3.1UKS

### Country Option Pack - Scotland

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## 0. Executive Summary

This report is **Deliverable 3.4UKS, Options Brief Pack – Scotland**. It makes the following recommendations:

### *Higher Education*

1. **SFC** should set up an innovation fund to support one new online initiative each year within an overall commitment to opening up education.
2. **QAA Scotland** should continue to develop its understanding of new modes of learning (including online, distance, OER and MOOCs) and how they impact quality assurance and recognition; engage in debates on copyright within the Scotland legal context; consider the effects of these new modes on quality assurance and recognition as they impact on Scotland's HEIs; and ensure that there continues to be no implicit non-evidence-based bias against these new modes when accrediting new providers (if relevant in the Scotland context) and inspecting institutions/programmes.
3. **SFC, QAA Scotland** and **Universities Scotland** should contribute to the debate about a more flexible approach to measuring credit ratings of modules, less based on study times, drawing on the Welsh experience with credit transfer, WBL, flexible learning and APL (both APCL and APEL); leading to the development of a Bologna-bis framework based primarily on competences gained not duration of study.
4. **SFC** should recommend to universities that they should work to improve and proceduralise their activity on APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning, in its various sub modes) and in particular to accredit knowledge and competences developed through all kinds of online study, informal and work-based learning, including but not restricted to OER and MOOCs, within agreed limits.
5. **SFC** should consider whether the specific Scottish context needs an Open Accrator to assist small and specialist institutions to handle APL for students entering these institutions and seeking to accredit prior study.
6. **Universities Scotland** should consider whether there are programmes or specific teaching situations (e.g. first year studies, pre-university studies) where a common approach to provision makes sense, and in the light of a successful outcome to such initiatives, foster the developments of common bases of OER material to support such provision.
7. **Scotland's funding bodies** should ensure that any public outputs from their funded programmes are made available as open resources under an appropriate license.
8. **SFC** should fund research into the cost basis for university teaching in both traditional and non-traditional modes and consider the implications of the results on its approach to funding.
9. **Universities Scotland** should adopt a standard license for all openly available educational material.
10. **SFC** and **Universities Scotland** should mount an initiative to upgrade the level of knowledge of university staff on IPR issues, perhaps as part of some wider initiative e.g. on MOOCs so as to give context and applicability for the knowledge.
11. **SFC** and **Universities Scotland** should encourage Scottish institutions to keep their continuous professional development programmes up to date in terms of newer modes of teaching and learning, including not only campus-based online learning but distance learning, OER, MOOCs

and other forms of open educational practice, and to move such programmes online and increasingly open and collaborative between institutions.

12. **SFC** should encourage institutions to consider the use of incentive schemes (and reconsider the issue of non-incentives) for academics engaged in online professional development of their pedagogic skills including online learning.
13. **SFC** and related bodies should fund research into the benefits of OER in the Scottish HE context, with greater efforts to integrate this with ongoing research on distance learning, on-campus online learning, and pedagogy, and with wider research on OER in and beyond Scotland.

#### *Colleges – recommendations to SFC and College Development Network*

- 1 Mount a campaign to educate lecturers, teachers and trainers on IPR issues.
- 2 Promote to educational users (leaders, practitioners, students and guardians) the availability and accessibility of open resources created through the European Commission’s cultural sector programmes and national cultural sector programmes, to make these available across the country.
- 3 Ensure that college budgets for digital educational resources are flexible enough to support the development (and maintenance) of openly licensed materials.
- 4 Sustain the development of Re:Source and continue to develop the OER communities in it.
- 5 Consider establishing a specialist OER function to undertake a cost-benefit analysis to assess the potential savings (or otherwise) which might be achieved through implementing an OER strategy.
- 6 Through Re:Source, establish a national quality assurance standard for OER content produced in the country.
- 7 Require (within reasonable expectation) OER to meet (disability) accessibility standards and ensure that accessibility is a central tenet of all OER programmes and initiatives.
- 8 Re:Source to consider establishing and funding an OER evaluation and adoption panel. (This panel should include lead teachers, content experts and accessibility experts.)
- 9 **Education Scotland**, through the Inspectorate<sup>1</sup>, should continue to develop its understanding of new modes of learning (including online, distance, OER and MOOCs) and how they impact quality assurance and recognition; engage in debates on copyright within the Scotland legal context; consider the effects of these new modes on quality assurance and recognition as they impact on Scotland’s HEIs; and ensure that there continues to be no implicit non-evidence-based bias against these new modes when accrediting new providers (if relevant in the Scotland context) and inspecting institutions/programmes.
- 10 Establish (and adequately fund) a professional development programme to help lecturers, teachers and administrators understand the benefits and uses of OER and open licensing. This would support teacher / trainer / lecturer CPD on the creation, use and re-use of OER, with coverage of distance learning, MOOCs and other forms of open educational practice, and also IPR issues.
- 11 Develop incentive schemes for lecturers, teachers and trainers engaged in online professional development of their pedagogic skills including online learning.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/)

- 12 Foster research into the benefits of OER and sustainable business models, integrating this with ongoing research on distance learning, in-college online learning, and pedagogy.
- 13 Support educational institutions in developing new business and educational models and launch research and policy experimentations to test innovative pedagogical approaches, curriculum development and skills assessment.
- 14 **SFC** should set up an innovation fund to support one new online initiative each year within an overall commitment to opening up education.

### *Schools*

- 1 **Education Scotland** should promote (within the context of their sovereign educational aims and objectives) to educational users (leaders, practitioners, students and guardians) the availability and accessibility of open resources created through their respective cultural sector programmes.
- 2 **Education Scotland** should promote to **Local authorities** and schools the benefits of making resources available under an appropriate open license.
- 3 **Education Scotland and Local authorities** should ensure that budgets for digital educational resources are flexible enough to support the development (and maintenance) of openly licensed materials.
- 4 **Local authorities** should ensure that any public outputs from their teachers and schools are made available as open resources under an appropriate license. (e.g. a Creative Commons open license- see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses>).
- 5 **Education Scotland and Local authorities** should require (within reasonable expectation) OER to meet (disability) accessibility standards and ensure that accessibility is a central tenet of all OER programmes and initiatives.
- 6 **Education Scotland and Local authorities** could consider establishing a specialist OER function/post to undertake an in-country cost-benefit analysis to assess the potential savings (or otherwise) which might be achieved through implementing an OER strategy.
- 7 **Education Scotland and Local authorities** should establish (and adequately fund) a professional development programme to help teachers and administrators understand the benefits and uses of OER and open licensing.
- 8 **Education Scotland and Local authorities** should set up an innovation fund to support one new online initiative each year within an overall commitment to opening up education.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The brief

This is Deliverable 4.3UKS, the **Scotland** sub-deliverable of Deliverable 4.3 of Work Package 4 of POERUP. The overall Deliverable Title from the proposal is:

*Options Brief Pack*

and the sub-deliverable title is

*Options Brief Pack – Scotland*

The Work Package title is:

*The role of National and International Policies and strategy*

The revised brief (taken from the Amendment, approved February 2014) for the Deliverable states:

*Options briefs packs on proposed policies will be prepared in the relevant language for:*

- *England, Wales and Scotland (Sero)*
- *Ireland (Sero)*
- *Netherlands (RdMC-OUNL)*
- *Poland (EDEN)*
- *France (Université de Lorraine) and*
- *Canada (Athabasca University).*

*Each options brief pack will have a general introduction, a section for schools, a section for universities and a brief section on other sectors. However, the detailed structure will be consistent with the structure of relevant ministries in the country (for example in Scotland there is one ministry covering both colleges and universities). Furthermore, the language of each document will be consistent with the terms and concepts that the country's education policies are conceived within – noting that in some countries there is no specific mention – or only marginal mention – of ICT in the education policy.*

This is the options brief pack for **Scotland**.

UK-wide issues are picked up in the document on **England**.

#### *The style of this Policy Brief*

We have aimed to write these policy briefs so that they are relevant not only to the specific country being discussed but also helpful for those readers from other countries trying to learn lessons for their countries. Consequently we have given rather more background information on the target country than “locals” will need – we hope that they will forgive our apparent prolixity.

Another key issue is the use of *footnotes*. Policy briefs are not supposed to be scholarly outputs so it is not usual to use the standard research apparatus of Harvard referencing. Indeed, some experts

take the view that even footnotes break up the narrative and logical flow to an unacceptable extent. However, in the area of OER and MOOCs much of the evidence is little known and much of what passes for “known” is contested or has evidential flaws. Consequently we have taken the view that for POERUP policy briefs, in particular the ones written by the Sero team covering Britain and Ireland, we shall use footnotes, hopefully mostly in moderation.

The final point is *timeliness*. Many of the policy briefs could not be finalised until quite late in the project as there were slow-burn but vital developments under way in many of the countries. In some cases, such as Scotland, there were developments such as the Independence Referendum in September 2014 where we could not wait to hear the result; in others, such as Wales, the key developments occurred in good time (March 2014 being a key date for Wales).

However, any document of this sort dates quite rapidly. This is an inevitable outcome of such projects. All we can say (and more is said in Deliverable 6.2 on Exploitation) that the Sero team who wrote this group of policy briefs remains in place and indeed are working on other OER-related study projects. Our wish would be that we could carry out, or at worst advise on, an update of these policy briefs every six months or so, if there is interest.

## 1.2 POERUP

The overall aim of POERUP is to carry out research to understand how governments can stimulate the uptake of OER *by policy means*, not excluding financial means but recognising that in the ongoing economic situation in Europe the scope for government financial support for such activities is much less than it was in the past, or is now in some non-EU countries such as US, Canada and Australia.

POERUP does not formulate policies based on informal discussions. POERUP wants the policies to be *evidence-based policies* – based on looking *beyond* one’s own country, region or continent, and beyond the educational sector that a ministry typically looks after.

POERUP also aims to provide education authorities, the research community and OER initiative management with *trustworthy* and *balanced* research results, in which feedback from all stakeholder groups is incorporated and which used as standard literature. A specific objective is to help readers in charge of OER initiatives to foresee hidden traps and to find ways of incorporating successful features of other initiatives.

*POERUP is about dispassionate analysis, not lobbying –it strives to take a balanced view within an overall positive orientation, in respect of OER specifically, and opening up education, more generally.*

POERUP aims to provide policymakers and education authorities *above institutions*, but also OER management and practitioners *within institutions*, with insight into what has been done in this area, plus a categorization of the different initiatives (major and minor) and the diverse range of providers. The POERUP studies provide practical and concrete information in order to contribute towards a more informed approach in the future.

POERUP achieves this by:

- studying a range of countries in Europe and seen as relevant to Europe, in order to understand what OER activities and initiatives are under way, and why they are continuing (or stopping, or more starting) – and taking account of reports from other agencies and projects studying OER in other countries;

- researching case studies of the *end-user–producer communities* behind OER initiatives in order to refine and elaborate recommendations to formulate a set of action points that can be applied to ensuring the realisation of successful, lively and sustainable OER communities;
- developing informed ideas on policy formulation using evidence from POERUP and (the few) other policy-oriented studies, POERUP staff's own experience in related projects, and ongoing advice from other experts in the field.

Finally, these results are disseminated and are being maintained in a sustainable way. The project has a web site [www.poerup.info](http://www.poerup.info) and a wiki [poerup.referata.com](http://poerup.referata.com) on which country reports and other outputs were developed and are being updated. This wiki is still active and is being sustained well after the formal end of the project, as OER, under a Creative Commons license (CC-BY-SA 4.0). In addition various OER Maps have been and are being developed – in particular [www.poerup.org.uk](http://www.poerup.org.uk) – and will be maintained.

### 1.3 Sero and Scotland

#### *Sero Consulting Ltd*

Sero is an education consultancy specializing in assisting institutions and government agencies with the exploitation of IT including learning resources (libraries) and e-learning. Formed in 2004, Sero has 20 staff and associates, with a specific business arm *SeroHE* focussing on Higher Education. Sero has many years' experience in working with non-profit organisations and foundations – including the European Commission (and its agencies and research labs), national, regional and local governments, JISC, and the UK Higher Education Academy.

Sero is the Project Manager for the EU project POERUP – Policies for OER Uptake – and was the Project Manager for the project VISCED – Virtual Schools and College Education – <http://www.virtualschoolsandcolleges.info>. Both these projects developed large wiki databases of educational initiatives at the institutional and programme level. They also leveraged on the prior project Re.ViCa (2007-2009), in which Paul Bacsich played a key role, which created a large wiki of virtual campus initiatives – <http://www.virtualcampuses.eu>.

#### *Scotland*

Sero has undertaken a number of e-learning and IT-related projects in Scotland, for the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)<sup>2</sup>, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Higher Education Information Directors Scotland (HEIDS)<sup>3</sup> and the Higher Education Academy/JISC – notably the Benchmarking of e-learning Exercise, which started in 2005. Most recently, the University of Glasgow was a FutureLearn case study interview site for POERUP and the OU Scotland was interviewed for the HE Academy flexible learning study, along with the Interactive Design Institute in Edinburgh. Sero POERUP staff have been actively involved with Open Scotland, the Open Scotland declaration and subsequent meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> Baseline study of e-activity in Scotland's Colleges (2007)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.heids.ac.uk/reports/HEIDS\\_Shared\\_IT\\_Services\\_Study\\_Report.PDF](http://www.heids.ac.uk/reports/HEIDS_Shared_IT_Services_Study_Report.PDF)

## 2. Current state of open education in Scotland

### *A note on Scotland and the United Kingdom*

The education systems of the four home nations of the United Kingdom are run by the devolved administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with the UK national government responsible also for England. However, copyright legislation and some aspects of industrial policy are controlled by the UK government. There are, therefore, no national OER policies for the UK as a whole. However, quite often initiatives funded for or targeted at England spill over, to a greater or lesser extent, to adjacent home nations – and the other home nations can buy into certain initiatives. For more in the situation in England and the residuary powers of the UK government as they affect such matters, see the companion report on England.

### 2.1 Open education initiatives

The relevant literature is suggestive of an openness to flexible learning approaches. Margaret Harris points to the Scottish experience of developing a “Lifeplace Model”<sup>4</sup>. She discusses this approach to flexible learning in the context of the need to develop a European-wide qualifications framework that standardises a variety of types of formal and informal (undergraduate) learning across national boundaries.

Since the turn of the century, Scotland’s education landscape has been characterised by broad moves towards openness, contrasted with a culture of secrecy and suspicion at some institutional and individual levels. Until recently there have been no national initiatives in higher education apart from JORUM<sup>5</sup>, which is also aimed at further education and there were earlier moves towards sharing resources in the FE colleges, through COLEG<sup>6</sup>. The schools sector has had GLOW<sup>7</sup>, an online community for sharing resources and ideas.

COLEG was a subscription service, and colleges that did not subscribe could not access the resources. GLOW is also a protected site, because of concerns about internet safety for minors; and in addition, sharing of resources is at the whim of local educational authorities: 12 out of the 32 do not allow their teachers to upload resources, as they wish to retain the copyright themselves.

The COLEG resources are now in the process of being transferred to Re:Source<sup>8</sup>, a new initiative managed by the College Development Network<sup>9</sup> to develop OER and OER communities. In the higher education sector, SFC has recently given substantial funding to Opening Educational Practices Scotland (OEPS)<sup>10</sup>, which is being developed by a consortium of The Open University in Scotland

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<sup>4</sup> Harris, M. (2012). Fulfilling a European Vision through Flexible Learning and Choice. *European Journal of Education*, 47, pp 424-434.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.jorum.ac.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> The COLEG service was a subscription service; its resources are now being transferred to Re:Source

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/usingglowandict/glow/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://content.resourcehub.ac.uk/xmlui/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk/development-networks/cdn-home>

<sup>10</sup> <http://oepsotland.org/about/who-we-are/>

(lead institution), University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde and the University of the Highlands and Islands. This is intended to cover all educational sectors, though the drivers are currently coming from HE.

### 3. Open education policies and recommendations in Scotland

#### 3.1 Policies

There are significant moves towards open education in all sectors in Scotland, several of them resourced directly, or indirectly, by the Scottish government. As yet, however, there are no national policies on open education and no national policy statements that mention OER.

#### 3.2 The Open Scotland declaration

In June 2013 an OER policy agenda began to appear, both in higher education and in the wider educational sector. A number of national curriculum and technology groups – CETIS<sup>11</sup>, SQA<sup>12</sup>, Jisc RSC Scotland<sup>13</sup> and ALT<sup>14</sup> came together voluntarily to form *Open Scotland*<sup>15</sup> which produced an Open Scotland Declaration<sup>16</sup>. The Scottish Open Education Declaration is a deliverable from the Open Scotland Summit held in Edinburgh in June 2013. This declaration builds on the UNESCO 2012 Paris OER Declaration<sup>17</sup> but the scope has been widened to focus on open education more generally, rather than OER specifically. Although Open Scotland is supported by several government-funded organizations, the Declaration remains aspirational; it has attracted approving comment from the Scottish government, but as yet no concrete actions.

### 4. POERUP recommendations for Scotland

As with the three main POERUP policy papers<sup>18</sup>, recommendations are discussed separately for three educational sectors: higher education, colleges and schools. Many of our recommendations are applicable to all three sectors: at the risk of being repetitive these are listed under each sector.

Our recommendations are directed both to Scottish government – both national and regional – and to key agencies that the central Scottish government funds, rather than to individual institutions.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cetis.ac.uk/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70972.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.jiscrsc.ac.uk/scotland>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.alt.ac.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/scotland>

<sup>15</sup> [www.openscot.net](http://www.openscot.net)

<sup>16</sup> <http://declaration.openscot.net/>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/Paris%20OER%20Declaration\\_01.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/Paris%20OER%20Declaration_01.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> D4.2U; D4.2C; D4.2S – see [http://www.poerup.info/key\\_outputs.html](http://www.poerup.info/key_outputs.html) for these

### *A note on politics*

Under the current constitutional rules, the next election in Scotland is in May 2016. This leaves plenty of time for any policy recommendations made in reports including this one to be put in practice. (In contrast, the next general election in the UK will be on 7 May 2015.<sup>19</sup> However, education is a devolved matter, and so, apart from cross-border effects, this has very little relevance in Scotland.) It is generally agreed that there is a greater degree of policy continuity in Scotland on education matters than there is in England. At this time of writing, little can be said about the educational direction of any post-2016 Scottish government.

On the economic situation, while the UK economy is at last growing quite strongly by EU standards, by around 3% and likely to continue at this sort of rate,<sup>20</sup> the pressure on national budgets will still be intense, whatever party/parties are in power and whatever the precise balance between tax rises and budget cuts.<sup>21</sup> This is one area where edge effects can occur, as ultimately the total Scotland budget is set by the UK government – under current arrangements at least, if there is a ‘No’ vote in the independence referendum.

*As said several times before, POERUP is a study project not a lobby group for OER; and Sero is a consultancy company with a track record of providing realistic advice to governments, agencies and educational institutions over many years.*

## 4.1 Higher education

There are 18 universities and university-level HEIs based in Scotland, which are funded by SFC. These are: Edinburgh Napier University; Glasgow Caledonian University; Glasgow School of Art; Heriot-Watt University; The Open University in Scotland; Queen Margaret University; Robert Gordon University; Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; University of Aberdeen; University of Abertay, Dundee; University of Dundee; University of Edinburgh; University of Glasgow; University of St Andrews; University of Stirling; University of Strathclyde; University of the Highlands and Islands; University of the West of Scotland. All are members of Universities Scotland<sup>22</sup>, which includes Learning, teaching and skills, Research and knowledge exchange, Resources, governance and administration, Widening access and equal opportunities and Internationalisation in its remit.

In addition to these, there are some non-university HE providers, such as Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) and a small number of private HE providers – e.g. the Interactive Design Institute in Edinburgh.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This is because of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011 – for more information see

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/elections-and-voting/general/general-election-timetable-2015/>

<sup>20</sup> *HM Treasury: Forecasts for the UK economy: a comparison of independent forecasts*, no. 326, June 2014,

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/321052/201406forecomp.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321052/201406forecomp.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> “Ed Balls: Labour will run a budget surplus”, 24 January 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/jan/24/ed-balls-labour-will-run-budget-surplus>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> Very active in online learning – <http://idesigni.co.uk/courses>

## Key Policy Recommendations

### Existing recommendations

The main starting point for policy recommendations is the Open Scotland Declaration. Using a CC-BY-SA 4.0 licence, it is deliberately set out to encourage comments; created in June 2013, it has received numerous online comments and is due to be updated and finalised before the end of 2014. Its introductory paragraphs draw attention to current developments:

*Scotland has long been at the forefront of technology supported education innovation and there are many examples of pioneering open education developments across all sectors of Scottish education. These include adoption of open badges and open assessment and accreditation practices; development of open educational resources, open frameworks for technology enhanced learning and massive open online courses; exploration of open data in education and engagement with organisations such as Wikimedia UK and the Open Knowledge Foundation. The next step forward is to join up these initiatives and develop policy support and guidance to enable the culture shift required to embed open education practice across all sectors of Scottish education.*

The Declaration then makes recommendations in 14 areas, which are summarised below:

1. Foster awareness of all forms of open education practice across all sectors of Scottish education. Promote open education and use open educational resources to widen access to lifelong learning at all levels, both formal and non formal, thus contributing to social inclusion, gender equity and special needs education.
2. Facilitate enabling environments for use of information and communications technologies and link these with strategies to improve digital literacies. Bridge the digital divide by developing adequate infrastructure, including affordable broadband connectivity and widespread mobile technology
3. Reinforce the development of strategies and policies for open assessment practices, open educational resources and open online courses
4. Promote the understanding and use of open licensing frameworks to enable different kinds of uses, while respecting the rights of copyright holders.
5. Support the adoption of open licences to facilitate the re-use, revision, remixing and redistribution of educational materials across Scotland and beyond.
6. Support capacity building for the sustainable development of quality open learning courses and materials.
7. Support institutions, train and motivate teachers and other key personnel to produce and share high-quality, accessible educational content, resources and experiences, while taking into account local needs and the full diversity of learners.
8. Foster strategic open education alliances. Take advantage of evolving technology to create opportunities for sharing openly licensed courses and materials and ensure sustainability

through new strategic partnerships within and among the education, industry, library, media and telecommunications sectors.

9. Encourage the development and adaptation of open education resources in a variety of local languages and diverse cultural contexts to ensure their relevance and accessibility.
10. Encourage research into open education. Foster research on developing, embedding and evaluating all forms open education practice. Focus on opportunities and challenges and the impact on teaching and learning in order to strengthen the evidence base for public investment in open education in general and open educational resources in particular.
11. Support the development of user-friendly tools and technologies to find, retrieve and share open education resources that are relevant to the needs of teachers and learners.
12. Adopt appropriate open standards to ensure interoperability and to facilitate the sharing and reuse of open educational courses, resources and assessment materials.
13. Encourage the open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds. Governments, institutions and education authorities can create substantial benefits for all by ensuring that educational materials developed with public funds are made available under open licenses (with any restrictions they deem necessary) in order to maximize the impact of their investment.
14. Promote the adoption of procurement policies that give equal consideration to free and open source software and openly licensed materials, and support the development in education and related sectors of processes and practices to provide a level playing field for free and open source software and open education resources in procurement.

There have been numerous comments on the original text, often emphasising that the recommendations should apply to all sectors of education, not just HE.

### POERUP recommendations

From the POERUP standpoint, Deliverable 4.2U produced in September 2013 a comprehensive and in our view well-researched and thoroughly piloted set of recommendations to foster OER in higher education across the EU. These recommendations have been presented at many conferences and discussed in many meetings, including meetings of the POERUP International Advisory Committee. There have been very few comments suggesting anything more than minor revisions to these. Hence we shall take these as the other source of our recommendations. The EU-level recommendations have been adapted to the Scotland context below:

1. **SFC** should set up an innovation fund to support one new online initiative each year within an overall commitment to opening up education.
2. **QAA Scotland** should continue to develop its understanding of new modes of learning (including online, distance, OER and MOOCs) and how they impact quality assurance and recognition; engage in debates on copyright within the Scotland legal context; consider the effects of these new modes on quality assurance and recognition as they impact on

Scotland's HEIs; and ensure that there continues to be no implicit non-evidence-based bias against these new modes when accrediting new providers (if relevant in the Scotland context) and inspecting institutions/programmes.

3. **SFC, QAA Scotland** and **Universities Scotland** should contribute to the debate about a more flexible approach to measuring credit ratings of modules, less based on study times, drawing on the Welsh experience with credit transfer, WBL, flexible learning and APL (both APCL and APEL): leading to the development of a Bologna-bis framework based primarily on competences gained not duration of study.
4. **SFC** should recommend to universities that they should work to improve and proceduralise their activity on APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning, in its various sub modes) and in particular to accredit knowledge and competences developed through all kinds of online study, informal and work-based learning, including but not restricted to OER and MOOCs, within agreed limits.
5. **SFC** should consider whether the specific Scottish context needs an Open Accrerator to assist small and specialist institutions to handle APL for students entering these institutions and seeking to accredit prior study.
6. **Universities Scotland** should consider whether there are programmes or specific teaching situations (e.g. first year studies, pre-university studies) where a common approach to provision makes sense, and in the light of a successful outcome to such initiatives, foster the developments of common bases of OER material to support such provision.
7. **Scotland's funding bodies** should ensure that any public outputs from their funded programmes are made available as open resources under an appropriate license.
8. **SFC** should fund research into the cost basis for university teaching in both traditional and non-traditional modes and consider the implications of the results on its approach to funding.
9. **Universities Scotland** should adopt a standard license for all openly available educational material.
10. **SFC** and **Universities Scotland** should mount an initiative to upgrade the level of knowledge of university staff on IPR issues, perhaps as part of some wider initiative e.g. on MOOCs so as to give context and applicability for the knowledge.
11. **SFC** and **Universities Scotland** should encourage Scottish institutions to keep their continuous professional development programmes up to date in terms of newer modes of teaching and learning, including not only campus-based online learning but distance learning, OER, MOOCs and other forms of open educational practice, and to move such programmes online and increasingly open and collaborative between institutions.
12. **SFC** should encourage institutions to consider the use of incentive schemes (and reconsider the issue of non-incentives) for academics engaged in online professional development of their pedagogic skills including online learning.
13. **SFC** and related bodies should fund research into the benefits of OER in the Scottish HE context, with greater efforts to integrate this with ongoing research on distance learning, on-campus online learning, and pedagogy, and with wider research on OER in and beyond Scotland.

We elaborate below on three of these recommendations – the numbering relates to the numbering of the list above:

#### 1. *Innovation*

*SFC should set up an innovation fund to support one new online initiative each year within an overall commitment to opening up education*

- The success of FutureLearn,<sup>24</sup> with Scottish university partners, and also one partner from each of Wales, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic – shows that on-the-ground collaboration can go on despite limited government funding.
- The FutureLearn development owes a lot to the support of BIS, the UK Department of Business, Innovation & Skills; even though BIS no longer has any UK-wide remit in education, it still has a UK-wide remit in business, competition and technology development.<sup>25</sup> The recent competition *Learning technologies - design for impact* from the UK Technology Strategy Board (soon to become Innovate UK) is designed to support “exploratory studies into the design of technology-based products and services that will improve learning outcomes”.<sup>26</sup> It notes that proposals must demonstrate “how the technology could lead to better learner outcomes and also offer a sustainable, commercial business model”. Moreover, projects “can be specific to any curricular subject or group of students, including childhood and adult learning, private learning, work-based learning and continuous professional development”.<sup>27</sup>

#### 4. *Accreditation of Prior Learning*

*SFC should recommend to universities that they should work to improve and proceduralise their activity on APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning, in its various sub modes) and in particular to accredit knowledge and competences developed through all kinds of online study, informal and work-based learning, including but not restricted to OER and MOOCs, within agreed limits.*

*Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), also called Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – and in US and Canada Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), or Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) – describes a process used by universities, colleges, etc to assess the skills and knowledge acquired outside the formal education process for the purpose of recognizing competence against a given set of competencies (or standards or learning outcomes). Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) focuses on assessment of previous formal education qualifications and is really a part of Credit Transfer and Accumulation; in contrast, Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) focuses on assessment of previous experience, including informal education outcomes from OER and MOOCs.*

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.futurelearn.com>

<sup>25</sup> Similar non-education federal powers have been deployed in Canada in the past to engender multi-province collaboration in e-learning since the days of Telelearning NCE in the late 1990s-  
[http://auspace.athabasca.ca/bitstream/2149/722/1/telelearning\\_research\\_and.pdf](http://auspace.athabasca.ca/bitstream/2149/722/1/telelearning_research_and.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.innovateuk.org/-/learning-technologies-design-for-impact>

<sup>27</sup> Focussing on training and professional development are other standard finesses to circumvent devolved education powers.

One recent study, in fact a companion study to the HEA Flexible Learning research described below, noted that “more than 90% of HEIs in the UK both recognise and award credits, yet there has been significant variation in the ways that such schemes are applied”. The author further describes the situation:<sup>28</sup>

*However, information and guidance, the first step towards an effective credit accumulation and transfer system, requires improvement. Information is often presented in a technical non user-friendly way, not sufficiently informative and/or difficult to find. In addition, little evidence was found of active marketing of APEL by the institutions.*

*While national guidance on the recognition of prior learning exists in the UK on the ground, the application of APL varies and it can be said there is little practice on which to base generalised patterns of activity in the UK. Variation refers to aspects such as the volume of credit that can be claimed on admission to a programme, time limitations for credit claiming, methods of assessment and costs.*

The Higher Education Academy has over the last two years carried out an extensive programme of research into flexible learning (including part-time and distance learning).<sup>29</sup> As this report was closing, it released a long-awaited synthesis report and recommendations *Conditions of flexibility: securing a more responsive higher education system*.<sup>30</sup> The report contained an extensive set of recommendations (pp. 69-71) which on the whole could be seen as rather unthreatening, yet if implemented seriously some could engender systematic change. For example, apropos of our Recommendation 1 it suggested:

*Funding Councils might consider, as a lever in promoting more experimentation in the system, adopting an initiative – with a limited but dedicated tranche of monies deliberately aimed at sponsoring initiatives from institutions with a view to increasing flexibility*

More pertinently to this recommendation, although there was little direct discussion of APL, it recommended that the Higher Education Academy might:

*work alongside other sector bodies and relevant credit networks to encourage and help embed a UK-wide credit framework and a more even take-up of credit accumulation and transfer*

If taken seriously by all institutions in all four home nations, this could be truly transformative.

## 6. Shared resources

*Universities Scotland should consider whether there are programmes or specific teaching situations (e.g. first year studies, pre-university studies) where a common approach to provision makes sense, and in the light of a successful outcome to such initiatives, foster the developments of common bases of OER material to support such provision.*

<sup>28</sup> Review of credit accumulation and transfer policy and practice in UK higher education, Manuel Souto-Otero, for the Higher Education Academy, 2013,

[https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Review\\_of\\_Transfer\\_of\\_Credit\\_Report.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Review_of_Transfer_of_Credit_Report.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/workstreams-research/themes/flexible-learning>

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/FP\\_conditions\\_of\\_flexibility.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/FP_conditions_of_flexibility.pdf)

This recommendation is deliberately designed to be wider than Gaelic-language, STEM or pre-university: in fact it covers much of the territory of POERUP recommendation 8:

*SFC should fund research into the cost basis for university teaching in both traditional and non-traditional modes and consider the implications of the results on its approach to funding.*

We feel that this is particularly important given the current Scottish approach to student fees and the strains this may put on education budgets as a whole.

## 4.2 Further education

Thanks to a considerable number of mergers in recent years, there are now 25 colleges in Scotland, a number not much different from the number of universities. The colleges funded by SFC are:

Ayrshire College; Borders College; City of Glasgow College; Dumfries & Galloway College; Dundee and Angus College (previously Dundee College and Angus College); Edinburgh College; Fife College; Forth Valley College; Glasgow Clyde College; Glasgow Kelvin College (previously John Wheatley College, North Glasgow College and Stow College); Inverness College UHI; Lews Castle College UHI; Moray College UHI; Newbattle Abbey College; New College Lanarkshire (previously Motherwell College, Cumbernauld College, and Coatbridge College); North East Scotland College (previously Aberdeen College and Banff and Buchan College); North Highland College UHI; Orkney College UHI; Perth College UHI; Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI; Shetland College UHI; South Lanarkshire College; West College Scotland; West Highland College UHI; and West Lothian College.

Less than 10 years ago, there were 43 colleges and the number is likely to reduce further in the next few years, with more mergers likely. The past three years have seen major reductions in the colleges' share of the overall Scottish education budget and a series of mergers across Glasgow, central and north-eastern Scotland and the effects of these on staff (redundancies and insecurity) have inhibited the development of a culture of openness. However, there is now clear evidence that the dust is settling and that cultures are changing and that staff are more positive.

With the sole exception of Newbattle Abbey College, all the FE colleges provide some HE courses as well, in much smaller numbers than the universities<sup>31</sup>: in 2012-13 17% (47,795) of HE students came from the colleges. The large majority of these were studying at HNC/HND levels and proportionately more were studying part-time and came from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds than the university-based students.

The College Development Network<sup>32</sup> supports the sector to deliver best practice, share innovations and develop colleges and their staff and has a new Chief Executive coming in to post in January 2015, who is strongly committed to open education.

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<sup>31</sup> See

[http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Statistical\\_publications\\_SFCST042014\\_HigherEducationStudentsandQualifiersatS/Higher\\_Education\\_Students\\_and\\_Qualifiers\\_at\\_Scottish\\_Institutions\\_2012-13\\_31\\_March.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Statistical_publications_SFCST042014_HigherEducationStudentsandQualifiersatS/Higher_Education_Students_and_Qualifiers_at_Scottish_Institutions_2012-13_31_March.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk/development-networks/cdn-home>

In general terms, many of the recommendations made, at least initially, in a university context, can be adapted for colleges. At the EU level, Deliverable 4.2C<sup>33</sup> gives a set of college-specific recommendations.

### **POERUP recommendations**

Deliverable 4.2C produced in October 2013 gives a comprehensive and in our view well-researched set of recommendations to foster OER in further education (VET) across the EU. These recommendations have been presented at many conferences and discussed in many meetings, including meetings of the POERUP International Advisory Committee. There have been very few comments suggesting anything more than minor revisions to these. Hence we shall take these as the source of our draft recommendations; the key ones are adapted for Scotland and listed below. In all cases we would look to SFC and the College Development Network to take the lead in these:

#### **1** *Communications and awareness raising*

- Mount a campaign to educate lecturers, teachers and trainers on IPR issues. Promote to educational users (leaders, practitioners, students and guardians) the availability and accessibility of open resources created through the European Commission's cultural sector programmes and national cultural sector programmes, to make these available across the country.

#### **2** *Funding and resources*

- Ensure that college budgets for digital educational resources are flexible enough to support the development (and maintenance) of openly licensed materials.
- Sustain the development of Re:Source and continue to develop the OER communities in it.
- Consider establishing a specialist OER function to undertake a cost-benefit analysis to assess the potential savings (or otherwise) which might be achieved through implementing an OER strategy.

#### **3** *Quality issues*

- Through Re:Source, establish a national quality assurance standard for OER content produced in the country.
- Require (within reasonable expectation) OER to meet (disability) accessibility standards and ensure that accessibility is a central tenet of all OER programmes and initiatives.
- Re:Source to consider establishing and funding an OER evaluation and adoption panel. (This panel should include lead teachers, content experts and accessibility experts.)
- **Education Scotland**, through the Inspectorate<sup>34</sup>, should continue to develop its understanding of new modes of learning (including online, distance, OER and MOOCs) and how they impact quality assurance and recognition; engage in debates on copyright within the Scotland legal context; consider the effects of these new modes on quality assurance and recognition as they impact on Scotland's HEIs; and ensure that there continues to be no

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<sup>33</sup> See [http://www.poerup.info/key\\_outputs.html](http://www.poerup.info/key_outputs.html)

<sup>34</sup> [www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/)

implicit non-evidence-based bias against these new modes when accrediting new providers (if relevant in the Scotland context) and inspecting institutions/programmes.

#### 4 *Teacher training and continuous professional development*

- Establish (and adequately fund) a professional development programme to help lecturers, teachers and administrators understand the benefits and uses of OER and open licensing. This would support teacher / trainer / lecturer CPD on the creation, use and re-use of OER, with coverage of distance learning, MOOCs and other forms of open educational practice, and also IPR issues.
- Develop incentive schemes for lecturers, teachers and trainers engaged in online professional development of their pedagogic skills including online learning.

#### 5 *Further research*

- Foster research into the benefits of OER and sustainable business models, integrating this with ongoing research on distance learning, in-college online learning, and pedagogy.
- Support educational institutions in developing new business and educational models and launch research and policy experimentations to test innovative pedagogical approaches, curriculum development and skills assessment.

#### 6 *Innovation*

**SFC** should set up an innovation fund to support one new online initiative each year within an overall commitment to opening up education.

### 4.3 Schools

In Scotland's schools GLOW<sup>35</sup> has been a pioneering national programme for sharing resources and developing an online education community for both teachers and students. As the nature and length of the URL below indicates, this is a secure site, with access only to registered users. Legitimate concerns over child protection and internet safety have prevented the community from developing into a full OER initiative. A second major barrier has been the attitude of a minority of local authorities, which have prevented the teachers they employ from uploading content, as they wish to retain the copyright themselves.

Education Scotland<sup>36</sup> is the Scottish government agency responsible for the curriculum (including the developing Curriculum for Excellence<sup>37</sup>); for learning, teaching and assessment; for supporting learners and community learning and development; for inspection and review; and for GLOW and ICT.

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<sup>35</sup>

<https://sts.platform.rmunify.com/Account/SignIn/glow?ReturnUrl=%252fissue%252fwfsfed%252fglow%253fwa%253dwsig nin1.0%2526wtrealm%253dhttp%25253a%25252f%25252flaunchpad.platform.rmunify.com%25252frp%2526wctx%253dr m%25253d0%252526id%25253dpassive%252526ru%25253d%2525252f%2526wct%253d2014-10-29T17%25253a03%25253a22Z%2526wreply%253dhttps%25253a%25252f%25252fglow.rmunify.com%25252f>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatiscurriculumforexcellence/>

The POERUP Deliverable D4.2S *Policy advice for OER uptake in schools* is available for consideration<sup>38</sup> and mapping into the Scotland environment. A number of its recommendations to EU Member States should have particular relevance to the Scottish environment and these are summarised below:

### POERUP recommendations

#### 1 Communication and awareness raising

- **Education Scotland** should promote (within the context of their sovereign educational aims and objectives) to educational users (leaders, practitioners, students and guardians) the availability and accessibility of open resources created through their respective cultural sector programmes.
- **Education Scotland** should promote to **Local authorities** and schools the benefits of making resources available under an appropriate open license.

#### 2 Funding

- **Education Scotland and Local authorities** should ensure that budgets for digital educational resources are flexible enough to support the development (and maintenance) of openly licensed materials.

#### 3 Copyright and licensing

- **Local authorities** should ensure that any public outputs from their teachers and schools are made available as open resources under an appropriate license. (e.g. a Creative Commons open license- see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses>).

#### 4 Quality and accessibility

- **Education Scotland and Local authorities should** require (within reasonable expectation) OER to meet (disability) accessibility standards and ensure that accessibility is a central tenet of all OER programmes and initiatives.
- **Education Scotland and Local authorities** could consider establishing a specialist OER function/post to undertake an in-country cost-benefit analysis to assess the potential savings (or otherwise) which might be achieved through implementing an OER strategy.

#### 5 Continuing professional development

- **Education Scotland and Local authorities** should establish (and adequately fund) a professional development programme to help teachers and administrators understand the benefits and uses of OER and open licensing.

#### 6 Innovation

**Education Scotland and Local authorities** should set up an innovation fund to support one new online initiative each year within an overall commitment to opening up education.

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<sup>38</sup> See [http://www.poerup.info/key\\_outputs.html](http://www.poerup.info/key_outputs.html)