

Annual Review

2016

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING



BE THE DIFFERENCE

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The year in numbers



**1st in Scotland
3rd in the UK**
for graduate employability

Almost 97% of our graduates are in employment or further study within six months of graduating

HESA 2016



Times Higher Education Student Experience Survey 2016



58,000
alumni in more than
150 countries



QS EXCELLENCE AWARD for
TEACHING

QS World University Rankings 2016/17



1 in 10
Stirling students
studied abroad



1st
in Scotland
for teachers,
lecturers and
feedback

International Student Barometer 2016



89%
STUDENT
SATISFACTION

National Student Survey 2016



QS EXCELLENCE AWARD for
INTERNATIONALISATION

QS World University Rankings 2016/17



Over 120
nationalities
represented
on campus



Professor Gerry McCormac,
Principal and Vice-Chancellor,
with Stirling 2016 graduates.

Stirling enhanced its reputation as an agent for change in 2016 – innovating and transforming the lives of our students, staff and the global communities we serve.

Principal's welcome

Our success in 2016 saw us maintain our strong position in UK and international rankings, while enhancing our reputation as an institution of excellence. We held graduation ceremonies for more than 3,200 students – drawn from over 85 countries – and our research income totalled over £11 million.

Our world-class researchers tackled issues of wide-ranging, global significance, from how mammals are being hunted to extinction, to the impact heading a ball has on the brain. We continue to benefit from our international collaborations with institutions around the world and our research and expertise made headlines around the globe. Articles written by Stirling academics for news analysis website *The Conversation* reached five million readers in the UK, Asia, North America and beyond. The University regularly appeared in the top 10 UK institutions for the number of pieces published, helping to promote our expertise to an international audience.

Our exceptional learning and teaching standards continue to be recognised by our students, as well as employers. An excellent performance in the National Student Survey saw us increase our overall satisfaction rate to 89% – placing us above the Scottish and UK sector average: we were also ranked first in Scotland and third in the UK for university graduate employability, illustrating industry demand for Stirling's skills-ready graduates. The University was also ranked top in Scotland, according to the International Student Barometer, for welcoming international students.

In April, we launched the University's new Strategic Plan 2016-2021 – our blueprint for achieving success over the next five years. Developed following extensive consultation with staff, students and a wide range of stakeholders, our ambitious targets are to: be one of the top 25 universities in the UK; increase our income by £50 million; enhance our research profile by 100 percent; and ensure internationalisation is at the heart of everything we do. Achieving these goals will allow us to transform the lives of our students, develop our staff and make a difference to society.

The University community watched with excitement and pride in August, as our Olympians and Paralympians ensured we lived up to our title as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence. With Stirling swimmers bringing home three Olympic silver medals, we were the best-performing Scottish university at the 2016 Games in Rio.

These accolades and achievements are the result of Stirling's long-term commitment to an exceptional student experience and demonstrate that having the right people, with the right skills and attitude, is critical to success.

Work also began on a new INTO Academic Centre located at the heart of the campus. The building will integrate the Centre into University life and provide our students with easy access to first-class study and social facilities. This project is testament to the quality of our pre-sessional education for overseas students and supports our vision to work with partners to grow our international population from a strong base.

These are just some of the highlights of the last year and there are many more institutional, departmental and individual marks of esteem that could be mentioned.

Looking ahead to the next 12 months, the roll-out of our new University brand, the completion of the INTO Academic Centre and the implementation of our Research Excellence Framework preparations are a few key projects on our agenda.

This will also be a very special year, as we mark the 50th anniversary of our founding. As the University looks forward to a memorable 2017, through our exciting calendar of events, I can think of no better way to begin the next stage in our shared journey. By continuing to work together, I am confident the next 50 years will be equally as transformational for Stirling's students, staff and the local, national and international communities we serve.

Professor Gerry McCormac
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Research with impact

Academics at Stirling carry out agenda-setting research that addresses key societal issues and has a positive impact on communities globally.

Building on research success

As a top research-intensive university, Stirling is committed to carrying out ground-breaking research that makes a difference to people's lives locally and globally.

Strong Research Excellence Framework (REF2014) performances across a broad range of subjects reflect the University's far-reaching impact on communities, industry and government policy.

Stirling wants to build on this success ahead of REF2021. Over the lifetime of the new Strategic Plan, the University will improve its academic reputation by enhancing its research profile by 100 percent. The University will achieve this by:

- Improving our academic reputation and increasing our ranking in global surveys by 100 places.
- Securing a place among the world's top 200 universities for research citations per academic member of staff.
- Improving our research environment by growing the number of PhD students and externally-funded researchers by 30%.

ALMOST
3/4 
of research activity rated either world-leading or internationally-excellent

REF2014



Dr Mario Vallejo-Marín, evolutionary biologist, and colleagues discovered some bees can remove pollen from nectarless flowers using vibrations.

Faculty of Social Sciences

Research by Stirling criminologists featured in an expert working group report to Scottish ministers and informed a Scottish Government policy announcement on support for changes to the use of electronic monitoring. Researchers undertook a national and international evidence review on electronic tagging for the Scottish Government, and co-led a larger EU-funded comparative study. Informed by their findings, Justice Secretary Michael Matheson announced plans to introduce new legislation and change existing laws to expand tagging and reduce the use of prison and remand.

Faculty of Natural Sciences

Stirling scientists have discovered that wild bumblebees are born with the ability to remove pollen from nectarless flowers using high-frequency vibrations. The study is the first to show that the ability to vibrate flowers to extract pollen is an innate behaviour in bumblebees and one that is refined over time and gives a rare insight into the complexity of the pollination activities undertaken by these creatures. This research helps our understanding of how buzz pollination works – a key factor in predicting the consequences of declining global bee populations.

Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport

Links between the retail environment and young people's use of e-cigarettes have been investigated for the first time as part of a major study led by the University. The research, funded by the National Institute for Health Research, is a six-year collaborative project between the universities of Stirling, St Andrews, Edinburgh and ScotCen Social Research. It aims to assess the impact of the ban on the display of tobacco, at point of sale, on teenagers' smoking attitudes and behaviours.

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

A study by Stirling Law School, for the Scottish Universities Legal Network on Europe, examined the possible implications of Brexit for environmental protection in Scotland. The report identifies a series of challenges associated with Brexit, including the absence of the stable regulatory framework provided by EU law, as well as the potential loss of access to EU funds and programmes. The paper was discussed in December with members of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee at the Scottish Parliament.

Stirling Management School

Stirling economists found that single women with personal wealth are more likely to become entrepreneurs than men. Using unexplored data from the Wealth and Assets Survey, researchers found evidence that people's willingness to start a new business increases with personal wealth, and that this trend is stronger among women than men.

Creating conversation globally

Membership of global online news analysis site *The Conversation* allowed Stirling's research and academic expertise to be accessed by people world-wide.

In June, the University broke through the five million-reads barrier for its articles – and Stirling has regularly been ranked in the top 10 UK institutions for the number of items published per month.

Stirling shared a host of articles on subjects ranging from the EU referendum, to TV programmes *Game of Thrones* and *Planet Earth*. Highlights included Dr Luc Bussiere's article on 'What species would become dominant on earth if humans died out', which was read more than 1.5 million times. Stirling academics' articles have been carried by top international media outlets, including *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, the *BBC* and *abc news*.

Together we have reached:


**5 MILLION
READERS**


**200
COUNTRIES**

Researcher spotlight

Dr Magdalena Ietswaart

Stirling has a global reputation for delivering world-leading research that addresses the needs of society and helps shape the future – impacting on people’s health, education and well-being worldwide.

Uncovering the true impact of heading a football

Stirling researchers have explored the true impact of heading a football, identifying small but significant changes in brain function immediately after routine heading practice.

The study from Scotland’s University for Sporting Excellence is the first to detect direct changes in the brain after players are exposed to everyday head impacts, as opposed to clinical brain injuries like concussion.

Football players headed a ball, fired from a machine designed to simulate the pace and power of a corner kick, 20 times. Before and after the heading sessions, scientists tested players’ brain function and memory.

Increased inhibition in the brain was detected after just a single session of heading. Memory test performance was also reduced by between 41% and 67%, with effects normalising within 24 hours.

Played by more than 250 million people worldwide, the ‘beautiful game’ often involves intentional and repeated bursts of heading a ball. In recent years, the possible link between brain injury in sport and increased risk of dementia has focussed attention on whether heading footballs might lead to long-term consequences for brain health.

Stirling’s Dr Magdalena Ietswaart, a cognitive neuroscientist, said: “In light of growing concern about the effects of contact sport on brain health, we wanted to see if our brain reacts instantly to heading a football. Using a drill most amateur and professional teams would be familiar with, we found there was in fact increased inhibition in the brain immediately after heading and that performance on memory tests was reduced significantly.

“Although the changes were temporary, we believe they are significant to brain health, particularly if they happen over and over again as they do in football heading. With large numbers of people around the world participating in this sport, it is important that they are aware of what is happening inside the brain and the lasting effect this may have.”

Dr Angus Hunter, Reader in Exercise Physiology in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport, added: “For the first time, sporting bodies and members of the public can see clear evidence of the risks associated with repetitive impact caused by heading a football.

“We hope these findings will open up new approaches for detecting, monitoring and preventing cumulative brain injuries in sport. We need to safeguard the long-term health of football players at all levels, as well as individuals involved in other contact sports.”

Dr Ietswaart and Dr Hunter were supported in the research by Stirling neuropsychologist Professor Lindsay Wilson and PhD student Tom Di Virgilio, consulting with leading University of Glasgow Medical School neuropathologist Dr Willie Stewart and a wider multi-disciplinary team.

In the study, scientists measured levels of brain function using a basic neuroscience technique called Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS). The findings from this National Institute of Health Research-funded study are the first to show the TMS technique can be used to detect changes to brain function after small, routine impacts.



Dr Magdalena Ietswaart,
Cognitive neuroscientist.

“With large numbers of people around the world participating in this sport, it is important that they are aware of what is happening inside the brain and the lasting effect this may have.”

Dr Magdalena Ietswaart,
Cognitive neuroscientist

Making the headlines

The research into the true impact of heading a football received media attention across the world.

The study generated coverage in press outlets including: BBC, Sky News, The Guardian, Wall Street Journal, Al Jazeera, BBC Radio 1, 4 and 5 Live, and on media platforms across Australia, New Zealand, Asia and Europe, reaching millions of people globally.

The Football Association (FA) and Scottish FA published comprehensive statements in response to the research. Dawn Astle, daughter of former professional footballer Jeff Astle, called for the University to receive funding for more research and former footballer Gary Lineker tweeted about the news. Private Eye magazine also published a cartoon illustrating the research.

The research paper gained the all-time highest Altmetric score in the journal EBioMedicine and it has been suggested the study could result in changes to rules around the types of heading drills performed at children’s football sessions in the UK.

Inspiring teaching

Stirling is committed to attracting the highest-quality teaching staff from around the world to make our campus an inspiring place to study. We unlock the full potential of staff and students so they can use their knowledge to shape the world in a positive way.

World-leading academics

'Being the difference' has always been in the University's DNA and Stirling academics are consistently recognised for excellent work in their area of expertise.

Carron Shankland, Professor of Computing Science, received a Suffrage Science award at Bletchley Park, the famous World War Two site where the Enigma code was cracked. This is the first time the Suffrage Science scheme has been awarded to women in maths and computing, having previously celebrated females in the life sciences, engineering and the physical sciences. Organised by the Medical Research Council, the awards were presented to 12 female scientists and were held on Ada Lovelace Day - the international day recognising women in science, technology, engineering and maths.

The First Minister Nicola Sturgeon appointed Sir George Reid, Professorial Fellow in Humanitarian Studies, to the Standing Council on Europe. The Council – composed of eminent diplomats, economists and analysts – provides advice to the Scottish Government on its response to the Brexit referendum.

Professor Kathleen Jamie, Professor of Poetry, won the Saltire Society Book of the Year 2016 award for her poetry collection entitled 'The Bonniest Companie'. Her book contains 51 poems which were described by the judges as "utterly relaxed and matter of fact, yet profound in their implications".



Carron Shankland,
Professor of Computing Science.



(L-R) Broadcaster Fred MacAulay, Paddy Campbell, Managing Director of BioMar, Dave Cockerill, Head of Fish Health at Marine Harvest Scotland, Professor Hervé Migaud, Deputy Director of Stirling's Institute of Aquaculture, and Jamie Hepburn MSP.

Global recognition

The University of Stirling Management School has been accredited by the Association of MBAs (AMBA) for its Masters of Business Administration (MBA) and Masters of Business Management (MBM) courses – the international standard of quality in postgraduate management education. It now joins an elite group of business schools globally and is one of only 14 in the UK to hold the accreditation of both courses.

Professor Sharon Bolton, Dean of Stirling Management School, said: "This is an important milestone for the School and signifies recognition of the strategic priorities which underpin the quality of our MBA and MBM courses."

Scientists from the University's internationally-acclaimed Institute of Aquaculture won the 'Innovative Collaboration Award' at the Scottish Enterprise Life Sciences Awards for their £4 million project to boost production in the Scottish salmon farming industry. Aquaculture experts from Stirling collaborated with the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre, world-leading salmon producers Marine Harvest Scotland, Scottish Sea Farms and feed manufacturer Biomar, to develop for the first time the sustainable farming of wrasse, a cleaner fish which supports the efficient production of salmon. Stirling's Institute of Aquaculture is the No.1 research and training department in its field, with 100% of its research classed as world-leading.

Helping shape Scotland's future

The University of Stirling and Heriot Watt University launched a new joint undergraduate degree programme which will train a cohort of chemistry and physics secondary school teachers. Set up with additional funding from the Scottish Government to help tackle a shortage of STEM teachers in Scotland, the innovative programme will combine Stirling's excellence in education with Heriot-Watt's reputation for excellence in the sciences. Led by Stirling, students are matriculated at both universities and will benefit from the facilities, support and academic excellence of both institutions throughout their studies.

In March, Stirling's new Centre for Child Wellbeing and Protection was launched. The Centre analyses issues that affect children's development at an individual, family and structural level and will lead new research for a range of partners and organisations. Professor of Social Work, Brigid Daniel, said: "Stirling has a strong track record of research and education in the areas of child protection, health and education, and the launch of the Centre is a timely opportunity to bring together many of the foremost researchers in these fields of work."



QS Global Ranking
of universities
under the age of 50

47th
in the world and
2nd
in the UK

QS World University Rankings 2016/17

Times Higher Education
World University Rankings

38th
in the UK
6th
in Scotland

The Times and The Sunday Times
Good University Guide 2017



Students celebrating at Winter Graduation.

Globally connected

Our outreach is global – with 120 nationalities represented on campus and worldwide research and teaching partnerships, Stirling is proud to be an international university.



Chiara Vidotto, Economics and Marketing student, in Shanghai during her Study Abroad summer.

Collaborating across continents

A Stirling scientist is at the centre of ground-breaking research to tackle the Chikungunya virus (CHIKV). Virologist Dr Manfred Weidmann is the only UK university scientist involved in an international collaboration focused on developing a point-of-care detection method for immediate use in fighting the CHIKV virus, a mosquito-borne pathogen currently transmitted in about 60 countries.

Linda Bauld, Professor of Health Policy at Stirling and Deputy Director of the UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies, is among an international team of experts exploring whether vaping with or without nicotine could help people ignore cravings for sweets and other foods.

Dr Christian Schröder, from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, collaborated with an international team of planetary scientists from Curtin University, Australia, California Institute of Technology, State University of New York and the Center for Earth and Planetary Studies, Washington DC, to reveal that the lack of rust on meteorites indicates that it would be difficult for life to exist on Mars today.

Stirling welcomes the world

Stirling is ranked top in Scotland for welcoming international students, according to the International Student Barometer (ISB) 2016. The survey showed more than 92% of surveyed overseas students at Stirling were satisfied with their overall experience, placing the University above Scottish, UK and international averages. The ISB also found Stirling made an exceptional first impression with students and was placed 1st in Scotland and 7th in UK for welcoming international students, and 1st in Scotland for teachers, lecturers and feedback.

Professor Leigh Sparks, Deputy Principal for Internationalisation and Graduate Studies, said: "As a global University, with internationalisation at its heart, our overseas students are valued members of the University community who contribute immeasurably to campus life."



Over 120 nationalities represented on campus

Education without borders

Professor John Gardner, Senior Deputy Principal of the University, conferred degrees upon 47 graduates of the highly-popular BA (Hons) in Retail Marketing at the Singapore Institute of Management Global Education (SIM GE). Thirteen graduates also completed the MBA in Retailing, a two-year distance learning course, in partnership with the Retail Academy of Singapore.

The course is supported by the Singapore Government's Workforce Development Agency and taught at SIM GE by staff from Stirling Management School's Institute for Retail Studies. The partnership in Singapore has been further extended with two new courses set to launch in 2017: BA Sport Business Management and BA Sustainable Events Management.

In November, more than 50 students from the University's accountancy, business and computing science courses delivered in partnership with Muscat College in Oman celebrated their graduation.

Plans are now underway to extend the successful partnership with Muscat College and introduce new undergraduate degrees in Human Resource Management and Marketing, starting in September 2017.

Building global connections

Stirling's Faculty of Arts and Humanities signed an international agreement with Historic Environment Scotland and The Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City, in Beijing, China, to establish a leading research centre for heritage and conservation. The Forbidden City is a World Heritage Site and houses the largest collection of preserved ancient wooden structures in the world.

This partnership will establish an international research centre for heritage and conservation at the University and the Engine Shed in Stirling, which is currently under construction. The centre will allow researchers to investigate a range of issues facing built heritage and the impacts of climate and wider environmental changes on a global scale.

A world of opportunity

Chiara Vidotto, an Economics and Marketing student from Italy, spent a summer studying at Shanghai University in China and a semester at the University of Economics in Prague, Czech Republic.

She said: "My Study Abroad in China has been the best experience of my life and completely opened my eyes to new cultural perspectives. I am so grateful to Stirling because it gave me the chance to have many experiences that I will always keep with me."

 94 exchange partnerships in 23 countries worldwide

The student experience

With access to an outstanding learning environment, first-class sporting facilities and cultural opportunities, students graduate from Stirling as leaders of the future – equipped with the skills to create change for the better.

The University was voted 1st in Scotland for a good environment on campus and high quality sports facilities, in the Times Higher Education Survey 2016.

Improving student satisfaction

In 2016, Stirling continued to improve the student experience.

The University participated in the National Student Survey (NSS) for the ninth time. The survey was issued to 1,445 eligible students, 70% of whom responded. Stirling increased its overall satisfaction score by 3% to 89%, our joint-highest in our NSS history (equal with 2010). We also ranked joint-third in Scotland in terms of how satisfied our students were with their experience.

In response to students' views and in collaboration with the Students' Union, Stirling introduced a new policy for assignment feedback. Feedback and feedforward are key parts of the learning process and encourage reflection to allow both students and staff to identify how they can improve their future work.

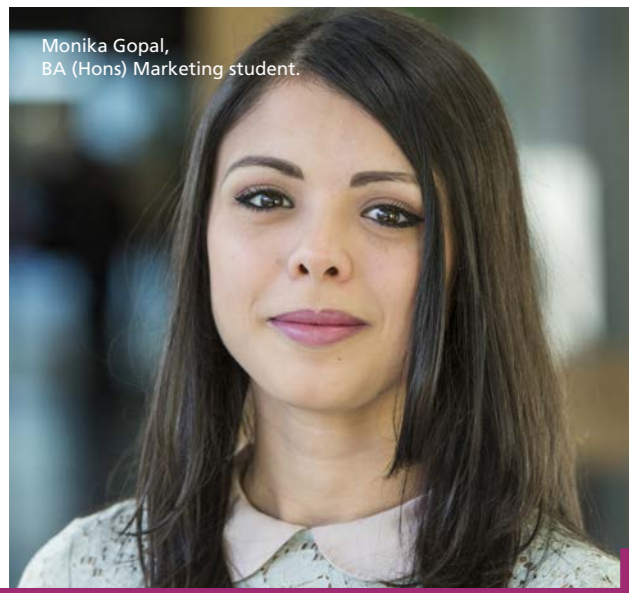
Preparing tomorrow's leaders

Stirling is top in Scotland and third in the UK for university graduate employability, according to statistics released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency in July.

Almost 97% of Stirling graduates – a 0.8% increase on last year – have a positive destination after University, including employment and further study. Stirling tops the table of Scotland's universities and gains the third-highest percentage of positive destination leavers of 151 UK universities.

Stirling students are in demand. Calum Burns, a 23-year-old football scholarship student, graduated with first class honours in Business Studies. He won an internship with Barclays in New York through the Saltire Foundation at the end of his third year and has now joined the company's Personal and Corporate Banking graduate programme.

Monika Gopal, a 22-year-old Marketing student, secured a summer internship with Enterprise Rent-A-Car in her first year at Stirling. Since then she has worked as a communications intern in Dubai through the Saltire Foundation and has been recognised as a finalist for the Marketing Student of the Year Award. She said: "These experiences have allowed me to evaluate my career ambitions and equipped me with core skills and knowledge."



Monika Gopal,
BA (Hons) Marketing student.

Dave Keenan,
Students' Union President.



Making students' lives better

The student experience is key in all that we do. In partnership with the University, we introduced Feedback Friday to help students understand and use their assignment feedback better. Our student-led teaching awards, RATE, were once again an incredible success with a record 1,273 individual nominations, for more than 450 different academic staff.

On the campaign front, the Union was pleased to be shortlisted for two National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland Awards (Education and Enterprise) and we sent the largest Scottish delegation for a third year in a row to the national Demo in London. The Union was also awarded four out of five stars at this year's Scottish Student Sport Conference in June for our Healthy Body, Healthy Mind initiative.

Further accolades came for students who have been recognised locally and nationally, including nominations for the NUS Student Volunteer of the Year, and final-year student Robert Murray picked up the award for Student Nurse of the Year: Mental Health. We also held our first-ever Volunteer Awards in April, recognising the achievement of our students both on and off campus, across 11 award categories.

The Fair Share, our re-use project based out of the Green+Blue space in the Atrium, is the first university-based project to be certified by Revolve, the national re-use quality standard offered by Zero Waste Scotland. The community-based project offers quality re-use alternatives to all products essential to student life at competitive prices. Working closely with colleagues in Accommodation Services, we work to ensure items can be re-used by students rather than going to landfill. To date, more than 250 tonnes of reusable items have been saved from going to waste.

We organised a number of events to encourage student participation in the Scottish Parliament elections, including hosting alumnus Jack McConnell, who delivered a public lecture entitled 'From Union President to First Minister'.

Looking ahead, we will continue to build on supporting equality and diversity on campus and represent the needs of all Stirling students.

Dave Keenan,
Students' Union President

"2016 has been an exciting and engaging year for the Students' Union, demonstrated by a host of successful campaigns, events and award-winning initiatives."

Dave Keenan,
Students' Union President

Sporting excellence

As Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence, Stirling is delivering the best for Scottish sport – preparing elite athletes to perform on the world stage, increasing sport participation and producing research to improve the nation's health.



Olympic swimmers Robbie Renwick, Duncan Scott, Ross Murdoch and Craig Benson.

Silver success for Stirling Olympic swimmers

Stirling celebrated its place as Scotland's top-performing University in Rio, when our swimmers brought three silver medals back to campus.

Scotland equalled the country's best-ever medal tally for any Games, matching the 13 from London four years ago – and Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence proudly delivered more than 20% of that haul.

Sports Studies student and swimming scholar Duncan Scott, 19 – trained by high performance coach Steven Tigg – enjoyed tremendous success. Duncan bagged two silvers as part of the 4x100m medley and 4x200m freestyle relay teams. Robbie Renwick also won a well-earned silver as part of the 4x200m freestyle relay squad.

The swimmers were selected for Team GB alongside Stirling team-mates Ross Murdoch and Craig Benson, who made it to the 100m breaststroke and 200m breaststroke semi-finals respectively. Stirling swimming coach Ben Higson was part of Team GB's professional coaching team in Rio.

Stirling delivered more than 20% of Scotland's Olympic medals



University golfer Gemma Batty.
© Leaderboard Photography

Golfing glory

Stirling golf scholar Gemma Batty was crowned English women's open champion match play winner. Business and Sport student Gemma, 22, also reached new heights when she lifted the Slovenian International Ladies Amateur Championship title in the Alps. Golfing glory continued when Stirling golfers were crowned victors at the British Universities and Colleges Sport Golf Championship and now hold the grand slam of student golf titles.

Winning duo

University of Stirling high performance swimming coaches Ben Higson and Steven Tigg were recognised at the Team Scotland Scottish Sports Awards, winning the 2016 Coach of the Year award. The duo have coached the University swimming team to a record medal haul at the Olympic Games, and great success at National and European competitions. The inspiring combo also jointly won Coach of the Year at the 2016 Sunday Mail, sportsScotland Scottish Sports Awards and the sportsScotland Coaching, Officiating and Volunteering Awards.

Triathlon triumph

Stirling triathlete Grant Sheldon was crowned World University Triathlon Champion in Nyon, Switzerland. The best elite student athletes from 33 countries competed in the 13th World University Triathlon Championships and Grant came out on top in the men's race.

Duncan Scott said: "To win one Olympic medal was beyond special, so to say that I have two is an incredible feeling. I have something special to show for all the hard work that people have put into my progression over the last four years.

"My coaches Steven Tigg and Ben Higson have been extremely supportive and positive throughout last season. They work closely with my lecturers to communicate my schedule so between that – and the world-class facilities on campus – the University plays an important role."

Rio 2016 was the University's most successful Olympic Games to date and Stirling attributes the historic success to exceptional coaching, academic flexibility for students, and a long-term commitment to nurture sporting talent.

Cathy Gallagher, Director of Sport at the University, said: "Our designation as Scotland's University for Sporting Excellence is one we take seriously – sport is part of our DNA and we are at the heart of Scottish sport. The scholarship programmes we run continue to show what young sportspeople can achieve with the right support."

Aileen Campbell, Minister for Public Health and Sport, said: "There's no higher honour than competing on a global stage and these swimmers have done Scotland, and the University of Stirling, proud with their achievements for Team GB."

Stirling honorary graduate Andy Murray also claimed a gold medal at the Games, while former sports scholar Colin Fleming competed in the tennis – and alumni Catriona Matthew was tied in 22nd place in the women's golf. Stirling was also represented in the Paralympics by gold and silver medallist, former student and wheelchair tennis scholar Gordon Reid, while alumnus Scott McCowan competed in Paralympic boccia.

"To win one Olympic medal was beyond special, so to say that I have two is an incredible feeling."

Stirling swimmer and Sports Studies student, Duncan Scott

Public engagement

In an increasingly inter-connected world, Stirling's partnerships and public engagement activities encourage a two-way exchange of ideas between the University and communities, supporting our commitment to making a positive contribution to society.

Connecting communities through the arts

In February, the University's Art Collection, in partnership with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum, hosted ARTiculation Scotland. ARTiculation is a nationally-acclaimed annual event, set up 10 years ago by the Roche Court Educational Trust, to promote the appreciation and discussion of art. The competition seeks to engage sixth year students with art, irrespective of background or experience, and to develop their confidence and ability to express their opinions, thoughts and conclusions. In 2016, more than 4,000 people throughout the UK participated and eight pupils competed in the Scottish final in Stirling.

Helping reduce Scotland's carbon footprint

Representatives from sectors across Scotland gathered at the University to embark on the Sustainability Leadership Development programme in August.

The course, the first of its kind in Scotland, helps organisations work collaboratively towards an economy that promotes low carbon emissions and a sustainable future.

Led by the University's Centre for Sustainable Practice and Living – a joint initiative with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency – delegates learnt about the importance of operating sustainably and the associated economic and environmental benefits.

Japan Week

Stirling hosted a programme of events in celebration of Japan. Members of the community, students and staff enjoyed a wide range of activities and events, including language classes for beginners, sushi demonstrations and workshops, ranging from karate to origami.



Japan Week is one of the highlights in the University's events calendar.



Andy Murray with local school children and the University's high performance tennis players.
© Lawn Tennis Association

Davis Cup comes to Stirling

The Davis Cup visited the University as part of a national Trophy Tour of Great Britain, launched by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). Following Great Britain's historic win against Belgium in the 2015 Davis Cup Final, when Team GB lifted the Trophy for the first time in 79 years, the LTA wanted to celebrate this momentous occasion.

Staff, students, local school children and members of the public attended the free event and experienced the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see and be pictured with the Cup at the University's Sports Centre.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Andy Murray was a smash hit with staff and students when he visited campus to show off the Davis Cup trophy.

Murray said: "I am proud to be back in Scotland with the Davis Cup and for the opportunity to share what was an incredible moment personally and also for all involved with the community."

"Stirling in particular played a huge part in my and my brother's tennis careers, as the indoor facilities are where we played during the harsh Scottish winters, and countless rainy days."

Opening education to all

In September, the Scottish Parliament's new Education and Skills Committee met Stirling staff and students to discover the innovative approaches taken to create a culture where students' abilities, not backgrounds, are valued.

As part of the session which focused on careers and education opportunities, students from local schools had the opportunity to meet Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) and question the Committee. MSPs were also shown a dance programme developed with local schools, a theatre group and the armed forces, as an example of how to engage school pupils in a new way.

The University has almost doubled the proportion of applicants from Scotland's most disadvantaged areas in two years, with almost 35% of students coming from the 40% most deprived areas in the country. The University also admitted a fourth cohort of undergraduate students across four fully-integrated degrees with Forth Valley College and is exploring opportunities to expand the number of integrated degrees on offer.

"I am proud to be back in Scotland with the Davis Cup and for the opportunity to share what was an incredible moment personally and also for all involved with the community."

Tennis ace and Stirling Honorary graduate, Andy Murray

The Stirling family

Stirling's global family of alumni are helping to shape the University's future – and are making an impact on the world stage.

Honorary graduates

In 2016, we welcomed a host of influential honorary graduates to the Stirling family. Those awarded the degree of Doctor of the University or Master of Arts included leaders from the worlds of education, the arts, health and science.

Stirling Honorary graduate
Dr Rita Colwell.



Mr Alan Bissett

Outstanding contribution to Scottish literary culture.

Emeritus Professor Andrew Whiten

Outstanding contribution to our understanding of the evolution of social cognition in human and non-human primates; for his leadership in making Scotland foremost in the study of animal behaviour; and for establishing the Living Links to Human Evolution primate research centre at Edinburgh Zoo.

Dr Helen Bevan OBE

Outstanding contribution to quality improvement in healthcare.

Mrs Elaine Wyllie

Outstanding contribution to the community, through implementation of the Daily Mile in St Ninian's Primary School in Stirling, and the influence of this intervention throughout the UK and beyond.

Professor Zhengshuan Li

Outstanding contribution to the promotion of Scottish Literature in China.

Dr Alan Simpson OBE

Outstanding contribution to the University and for services to Higher Education.

Dr Rita Colwell

Outstanding contribution to Science.

Stirling alumnus Hamish Hamilton
at the BAFTAs.



Alumnus in the spotlight

The University's alumni represent almost half a century's worth of Stirling memories and continue to be the difference by sharing their knowledge with the world.

Hamish Hamilton

POSITION

Music video and television director

STUDIED

BA (Hons) Accountancy 1989

Hamish is a double-BAFTA award-winning UK director, who has produced and directed some of the world's biggest live shows. Hamish is known for directing ceremonies ranging from the Oscars, to the MTV Video and Music Awards, to the Super Bowl half-time shows. He has directed live concert DVDs for artists including U2, The Rolling Stones and Madonna.

Additional credits include directing and executive producing the televising of the opening and closing ceremonies for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympic Games, in partnership with Danny Boyle and Stephen Daldry. He won a Peabody Award, for the CNN Heroes show, and holds both Grammy and Emmy nominations. Looking back on his student days at Stirling, he says:

"I chose Stirling because the campus was beautiful and had a great energy. I wasn't really a city boy and had spent my teens walking in the Pennines and Lake District, so Scotland's landscape appealed. Stirling completely changed my life. I made some great friends – they were positive, friendly, supportive and all had big dreams.

"I got involved in Radio Airthrey and the Students' Union and began DJing at the Grange and the Gannochy almost immediately. I was the social secretary, or entertainments officer, in those days, so I was quite active on the social side.

"In second year, I was in Radio Airthrey when a lady from the BBC phoned needing people to help with a radio show and a small group of us got involved in a project for Radio Scotland. Two years later, when I applied for a trainee job at the BBC that same lady was there on the panel – and so began a career in broadcasting.

"My advice to students would be to have ideas – they're the currency by which you will make or break yourself. I'd also say you need to have belief in what you do, be passionate about how you sell those ideas, be incredibly self-critical – and go for it!"

"Stirling completely changed my life. I made some great friends – they were positive, friendly, supportive and all had big dreams."

Stirling alumnus Hamish Hamilton

Delivering our vision

In 2016, Stirling enhanced the student experience and continued to demonstrate excellence, innovation and impact across the institution.



Eileen Schofield,
University Secretary and
Chief Operating Officer.

The University has much to be proud of as we look back on the successes highlighted in this report.

In 2016, we exceeded targets for undergraduate recruitment, bringing the total number of full-time undergraduates at Stirling up to 9,000. We secured additional widening access places for Scottish and EU students and successfully recruited students from across the UK and internationally.

Ensuring our students have the best quality experience is central to everything we do and our continued efforts were recognised when we achieved our highest satisfaction score to-date, in the National Student Survey. This is testament to the ongoing efforts of our staff thinking of new and innovative ways to enhance the student experience. The introduction of a new policy for assignment feedback, developed in consultation with the Students' Union, was an initiative that responded directly to the views of our students.

“We look to the future with confidence, ambition, and a commitment to realise our vision to be recognised across the world as a University that strives to be the difference to society.”

Eileen Schofield,
University Secretary and
Chief Operating Officer

Stirling is a place where ability, not background, is valued and we take pride in being recognised as a leader in the sector for supporting people from all walks of life to achieve their full potential. We were therefore delighted to welcome more than 100 delegates from across colleges, universities and students' unions to campus for the Impacting on Access 2016 conference on widening access and equality, hosted jointly by the Scottish Funding Council.

Our ongoing OneStirling initiative, which promotes equality and diversity across the University, continued to drive our Athena Swan work, and sponsored a successful week-long series of events to celebrate International Women's Day.

Operating effectively and sustainably remains a key strategic priority for the University. The new Statement of Recommended Practice resulted in significant changes in the way universities present their financial statements and Stirling is in good financial health. We continue to make significant positive impacts on our utility consumption and CO₂ footprint – last year consumption on campus was reduced by around 2,800 tonnes.

In 2016, we developed the 'Making it Happen' implementation plan, which outlines the actions we will take to deliver the ambitious targets of our Strategic Plan 2016-2021. As we work to achieve those targets, it's likely that we will be presented with fresh challenges along the way. But the strength of Stirling is in its people, and I'm confident that through our collective will we can deliver on our shared vision, regardless of the changing environment.

In 2017, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary since our founding, we look to the future with confidence, ambition, and a commitment to realise our vision to be recognised across the world as a University that strives to be the difference to society and the communities we serve through our innovative teaching, learning and research.

Eileen Schofield
University Secretary and
Chief Operating Officer

University of Stirling
Stirling, Scotland, UK, FK9 4LA
stir.ac.uk

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