



**SWAP East**

**Annual Report and Financial**

**Accounts**

**2024-2025**

supporting  
adults since  
**1988**

**615**  
students a  
year

**35**  
access  
courses

**84%**  
progression  
rate

**900**  
individual  
routes

**14K+**  
students  
into  
university

## Executive summary

This summary provides a snapshot of our year. Further information, including more detailed facts and figures, can be found in the annual report.

### Who we are

SWAP East is an educational charity set up in 1988, and a partnership of fourteen colleges and twelve universities in the East of Scotland. Our function is “to promote the advancement of adults into education, with a particular focus on those from widening access backgrounds”. We use tailored, quality-approved, access programmes delivered by college partners across a broad curriculum to support the progression of adults with few or no qualifications into higher education.

As we are a charity our executive functions as our members board, with one representative from each partner college and university. We have a chair and vice-chair and meet at least twice a year to manage the aims and objectives of the partnership. Detailed information on our governance and structures can be found in Appendix D of the main report.

### What we do



Partnership working - we work with partners and external organisations to promote and facilitate access to higher education for adult learners.



Accessible routes – through our partnership work we provide quality-assured programmes, tailored to the needs of adult learners, that deliver dedicated pathways into higher education



Student Success - we develop the abilities of our students through the provision of tailored information, advice and guidance (IAG) before, during and after their time as a SWAP student



Social Justice - we advocate for adult learners within the Scottish Education sector, promoting their success to highlight social justice, equality and diversity issues for adult learners

### How we do it

#### Partnership working and accessible routes

We work closely with our colleges on the development of new programmes and the re-introduction of existing programmes for delivery, including our second Access to Medical Studies programme and an online Access to Physical Sciences programme. Details can be found in the main report.

In 2024-25 seven programmes were either withdrawn or did not recruit, contributing to the downturn in overall recruitment figures of 4.5% in the number of students year on year. Recruitment for entry in 2025-26 programmes has improved, resulting in an increase of 8% year on year. We continue to work closely with partners to support delivery of new programmes relevant to their region and student needs.

Student progression into university remains steady at 87%, whilst those progressing to HNC remains a little down on prior years at 6%. The number of students whose destination is unknown has increased slightly this year, and could account for this reduction.

#### Student success

Students continue to progress into a wide range of subjects across the university sector: 18 universities and 47 subject areas. We are delighted that we have our first Access to Medical Studies student now on a Dentistry degree, one of the most competitive degrees in the sector. Congratulations to them!

We continued developing our online Preparation for Higher Education support package, involving dedicated IAG through the UCAS application process. This includes advice work experience, strategies on applications and support writing personal statements. Where possible we also arrange supported visits and talks from universities where either competition for places is high or specific work experience is needed.

In the last two years the numbers of students withdrawing from their programme who do so before Christmas has doubled at the national level. The key issues were financial, and the reality of returning to education versus the desire to return, although within our region the dominant reasons are domestic and health.

Our bank of Peer Support Volunteers (PSVs), all former SWAP students currently studying in higher education, continue to be a valuable source of information and support to current SWAP students. We take every opportunity to grow this group and facilitate conversations and remain thankful for the engagement of SWAP students past and present.

### Social justice

SWAP programmes continue to support work to tackle poverty in Scotland. The makeup of our cohort remains overwhelmingly from widening access backgrounds, including significant numbers from MD20 and MD40 backgrounds, single parents, young parents, disabled students and adults with qualifications below SCQF level 6. We continue to maintain and develop resilient and trusted programmes that provide successful student outcomes in difficult financial times for both partners and students.

Research undertaken with support from The Robertson Trust (TRT) into the impact of finance and other issues on returning adult students highlighted the financial challenges faced by our students, the impact of poverty on the student experience and the additional challenges from groups who have had or are currently dealing with multiple risks due to their circumstances.

<https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/publications/issues-affecting-mature-students-in-higher-education>

From this The Robertson Trust created support packages for adult learners and for students with children, providing up to £4,250 per year of financial support alongside a wider package of wraparound care.

### Why we do it

Our students can be found at every level of higher education. Jenna King managed to survive studying online through Covid whilst juggling family life to achieve a First-Class Honours. Now she is planning her PhD -

<https://swap-east.ed.ac.uk/from-swap-programme-to-phd>.

Then there's Grant Cooper, a former SWAP student, who has been named Scotland's Student of the Year for 2025 - <https://swap-east.ed.ac.uk/former-swap-student-named-scotlands-nursing-student-of-the-year>.



Grant and Jenna reflect on the support they had at college, and the way SWAP programmes prepared them for university life. We are so proud of them both, and all our SWAP students.

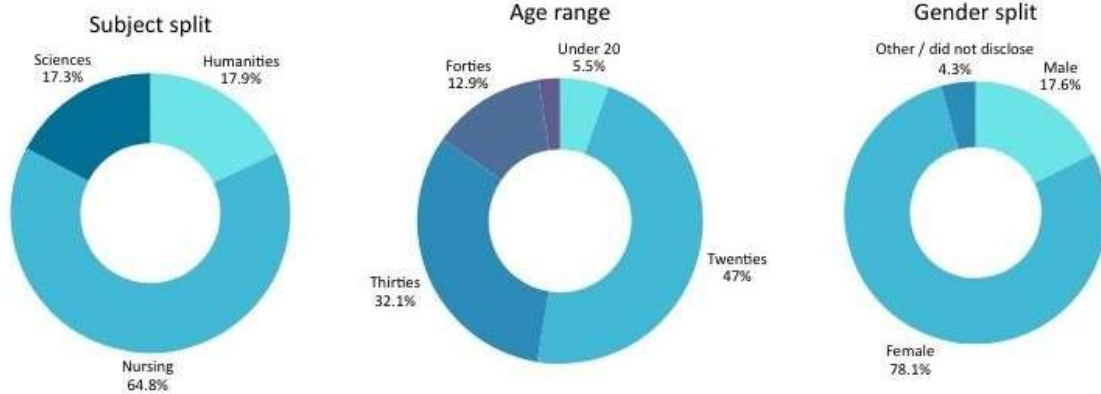
### Thanks

We can't function without the continued support of our partners. Colleges continue to run SWAP programmes with restricted finances, and universities provide valuable in-kind support to everything from our Study Skills Events and enhanced application and interview preparation to input into our tracking work.

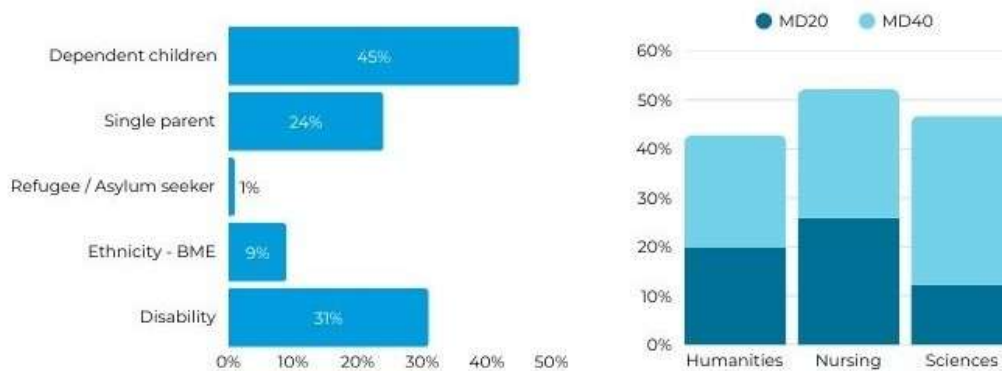
We are grateful to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for moving their funding of the SWAP national programme to core funding, enabling improved long-term planning, to The University of Edinburgh who provide hosting for the team, and to the Executive members for their continued support, encouragement and guidance.

Thanks also to The Robertson Trust for support provided to research issues facing current adult learners in higher education and, on behalf of our students, for the creation of the support packages for adult learners and single parent students at university.

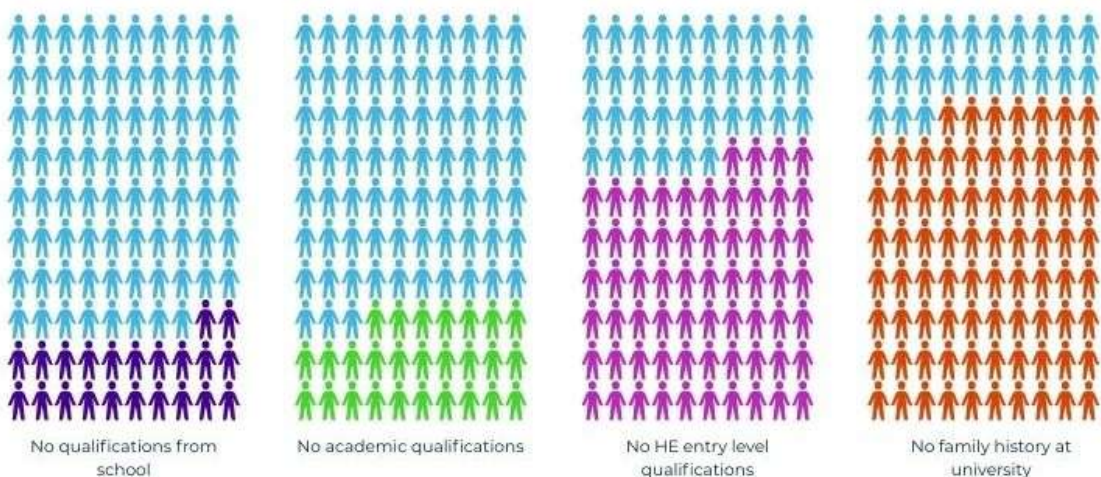
# Student Population



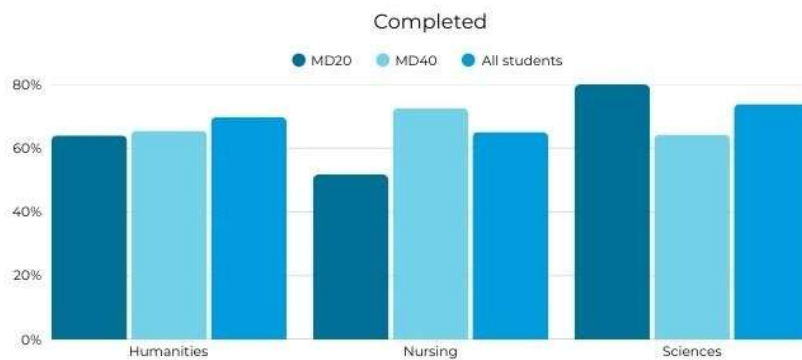
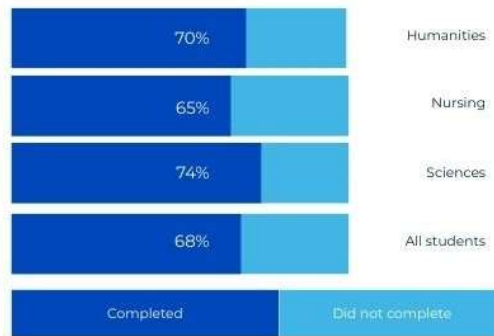
## Widening access indicators



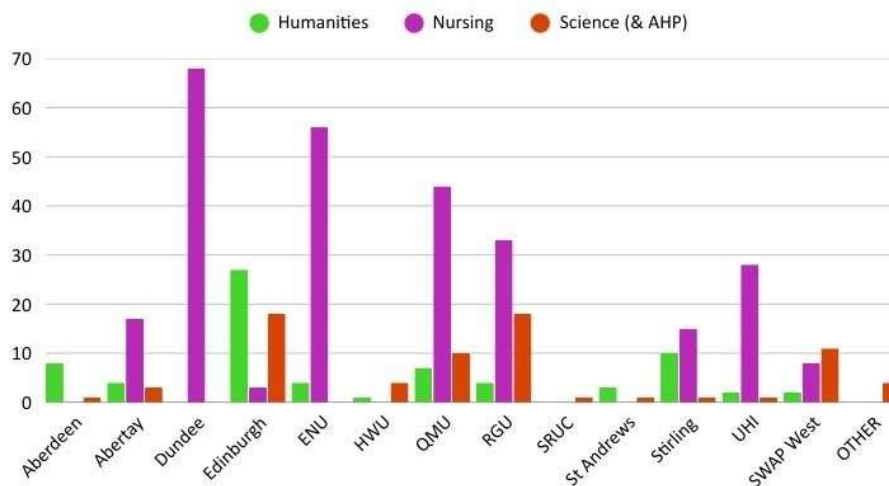
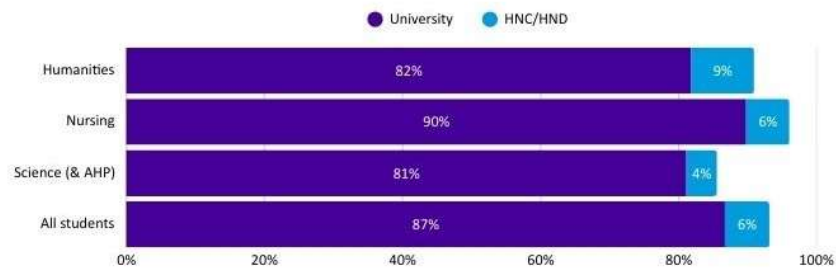
## Education background



## Student Success



## Student Progression





## Our year in detail

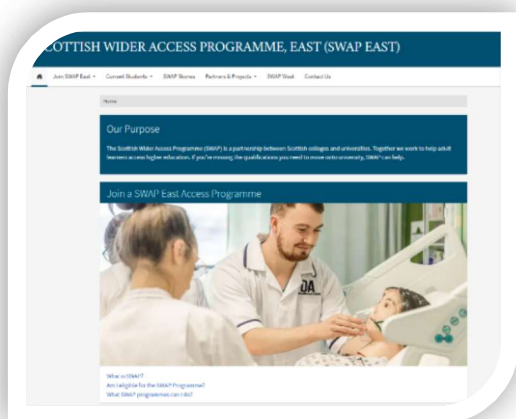
### Partnership working

“Partnership working - we work with partners and external organisations to promote and facilitate access to higher education for adult learners.”

SWAP by its nature is a network, and our partners work hard to promote the benefits of SWAP programmes to adult learners who approach them. We work closely with partners to ensure they have up-to-date information on their websites and are always happy to provide additional information and training to new staff in advisory positions.

In addition, we use wider networks and partnerships to promote SWAP, such as SCAPP, Skills Development Scotland, professional bodies such as HELOA Scotland and advisory groups. A good example of this would be the inclusion this year of the SWAP Access to Medical Studies programme in NHS Education Scotland’s [Your Med Future](#) Hub.

As the success of our online programmes continues to grow, we are looking for more ways to promote these routes. This year we created online flyers, which we distributed throughout our network.



During this year we have worked on the development of our new website, with help from The University of Edinburgh. This provides better access to information, advice and guidance (IAG) for both prospective and current students.

Our ability to promote our programmes is limited as we are unable to maintain a marketing budget within our current funding; however, we continue to investigate ways to promote our programmes through other means. We are grateful to the work our partners do to promote SWAP on our behalf.

### Accessible routes

“Through our partnership work we provide quality assured programmes, tailored to the needs of adult learners, that deliver dedicated pathways into higher education.”

### Programme development

The development and maintenance of programmes remain at the heart of what we do. At the start of the year, we launched three new programmes: -

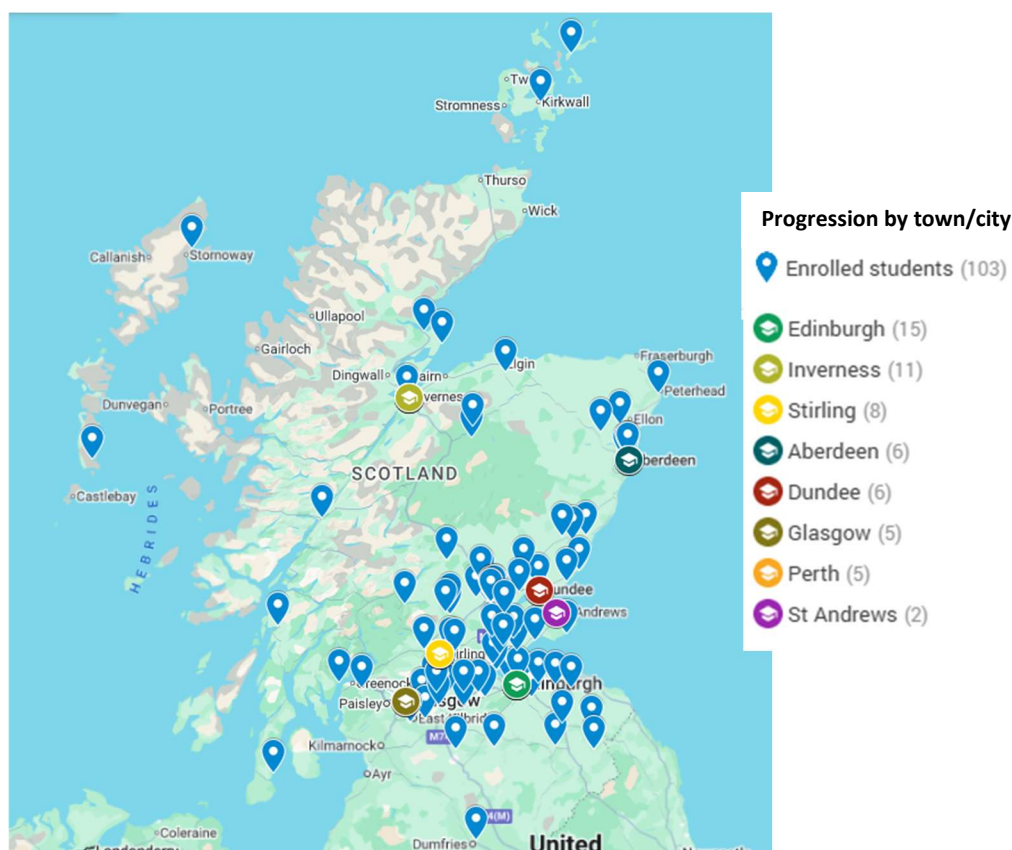
- Forth Valley College (Falkirk) – Access to Nursing 2024-25 – 12 students
- UHI North West and Hebrides Allied Health Professions (online) – 2024-25 – 7 students
- UHI North West and Hebrides Access to Nursing 2024-25 (online) – 6 students

The two UHI programmes are a result of the merger of UHI North Highland and West Highland colleges, where the programmes were delivered in person but with small numbers. They were changed to online delivery during the merger to improve recruitment and delivery. All three programmes have continued into 2025-26 and increased recruitment.

In addition, we worked on the development and promotion of a further four programmes for 2025-26, all of which have recruited successfully: -

- Dundee & Angus College – Medical Studies
- Edinburgh College – Social Sciences (Sighthill campus) - reintroduction
- UHI Inverness – Science
- UHI Perth – Physical Sciences (online)

The continued development of online programmes would appear to be filling a gap within our student base, as students from across the country study on the SWAP programmes and then progress to universities across Scotland. The image below evaluates student enrolment and progression for AY 2022-23 and 2023-24: -



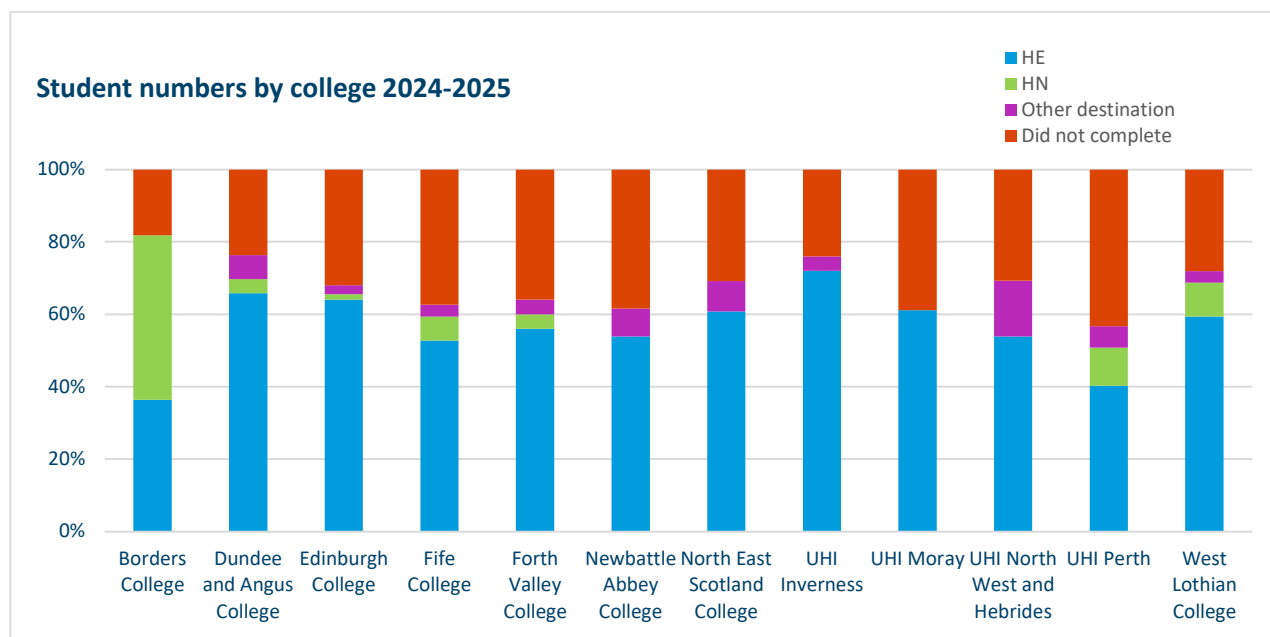
### Student population

Overall recruitment is slightly down year on year, completing a three-year downward trend, although still up on the target set by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) based on pre-Covid numbers. Nursing is still seeing larger numbers than before the pandemic, whilst Social Sciences subjects continues to decline significantly, particularly from those interested in teaching professions. A breakdown can be found in Appendix B.

Unfortunately, this year we fell short of our target of 70% of students completing their access programme, due to losses in the Nursing programmes. A worrying statistic across SWAP nationally is the sharp increase in the number of students who withdraw before the Christmas break. This year in SWAP East 58% of those who withdrew did so before the end of December; the highest rates were in Science and Allied Health Professions (AHP) programmes which had a pre-Christmas rate of 79%. Whilst the most popular reason given for withdrawing was domestic, the most prevalent reason given for the Science programmes was health. Domestic and health reasons account for 56% of the withdrawals from Nursing programmes. A breakdown can be found in Appendix B.

Student numbers	SFC Target	Enrolled	Completed		Progressed			
					University	HNC/HND	All HE	
Humanities	256	126	88	70%	72	8	80	91%
Nursing	232	464	303	65%	272	19	291	96%
Science (& AHP)	123	120	90	75%	73	4	77	86%
<b>Total</b>		<b>710</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>SFC Targets</b>	<b>611</b>			<b>70%</b>				

Whilst completion rates are lower this year, we continue to progress almost all of those who complete our programmes into higher education, either straight into university or remaining in the college sector to study a HNC or HND. This is a testament to how well the SWAP East partnership works in practice and evidences the benefits of having dedicated progression routes from each access programme into higher education courses across the country.



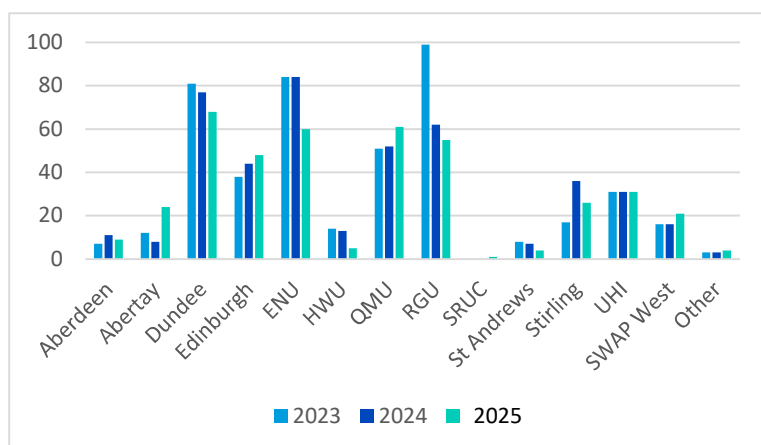
**N.B.** Please see Appendix B for a breakdown by college and subject grouping.

There are a small number of students (19) we were unable to identify a destination for; most of these declined their offers so may have felt unable to take up their university place. This only accounts for 4% of students who completed the programme, however we would like to be able to support all our students so will work on ways to identify and support these students moving forward.

#### University progression

The following charts give an idea of the spread across both our partners and others, and the recent trend across SWAP-East progression, which continues to exhibit an overall drop in numbers that mirrors the trends in the wider sector. A more detailed breakdown can be found in Appendix C.





Progression into university remains steady year on year, with a total of 93% of those who completed their SWAP programme moving onto either university or a HN qualification at college.

Overall, the universities with the largest numbers continue to be those who offer Nursing programmes, and reflects the overall makeup of the SWAP East cohorts.

Students continue to progress into a wide range of subjects across the university sector, including one student with a place on the Horticulture degree at SRUC, five students into Medicine, eighteen into Paramedic Science, eight into Child Nursing, four studying Midwifery and from the class of 2023-24 one student into Dentistry at The University of Glasgow, one Vet and one Architect: all of which are very competitive subjects.

There are also two students taking advantage of our new progression routes into the courses at Scotland's College of Chiropractic. In total our students have places at 18 universities across 47 subject areas.

### Student success

"We develop the abilities of our students through the provision of tailored information, advice and guidance (IAG) before, during and after their time as a SWAP student."

SWAP East staff provide tailored one-to-one guidance to potential students throughout the year. This can range from adult learners who know what they want to study but are unsure how to get into university to those who know they want to study something but are not sure what to do or how to go about it. We work in conjunction with our partners, both within the partnership and externally (such as Skills Development Scotland) to provide clear IAG to all enquiries. This can often include enquiries from students who may not be eligible as a SWAP student; however, we can suggest other options to them and direct their enquiries accordingly.

Our main source of IAG to current SWAP students are our Preparation for Higher Education materials, and we are constantly seeking to update these. This year we reviewed materials as we moved onto our new website which now range from information on applying through UCAS to useful skills for studying at university, providing easier access to materials that both lecturers and students can use.



We maintain a bank of around 50 Peer Support Volunteers (PSVs), who are all SWAP students currently studying at university, and take every opportunity for them to engage with the students on our access programmes. Engagement continues through our Facebook Peer Support Group, and our PSVs regularly help at Study Skills Events, classroom talks and online sessions.

The contribution of the PSVs to our events is invaluable, and something we are very grateful for. PSVs volunteer their time to 'give back' to current students and are by far the best resource we have to both encourage student success and promote the benefits of the SWAP programme.

We continue to run Study Skills Events – one in-person event for science students and one online session for Humanities and Nursing students. The aim of these events is to demystify university to students who not know what a university looks and feels like, and to provide them with useful skills such as Essay Writing, Note-taking, and Referencing to ease the transition into university life. Hands on sessions at the Science event confirm to students that they are developing skills in college that they need at university. Q&A sessions with SWAP students at university help reassure current students that they will cope with university life.

These would not be possible without contributions by university staff and former SWAP students who generously give up their time to help support the success of SWAP students.



We co-ordinate visits to university campuses wherever possible, particularly for students applying to high-demand subjects. Examples of this include our visit to The University of Edinburgh's Easter Bush campus for our Veterinary Medicine students on the Access to Medical Studies programme, and The University of Dundee's visit to their Kirkcaldy campus for Access to Nursing students.

### Social justice

"We advocate for adult learners within the Scottish Education sector, promoting their success to highlight social justice, equality and diversity issues for adult learners within further and higher education."

SWAP continues to occupy an almost unique position in the Scottish Tertiary Education sector, providing the only partnership focussed solely on the adult learner with dedicated progression routes into partner universities. As such we are often called to input into research projects to advocate for adult learners. To this end we maintain representation on several regional and national groups, including: -

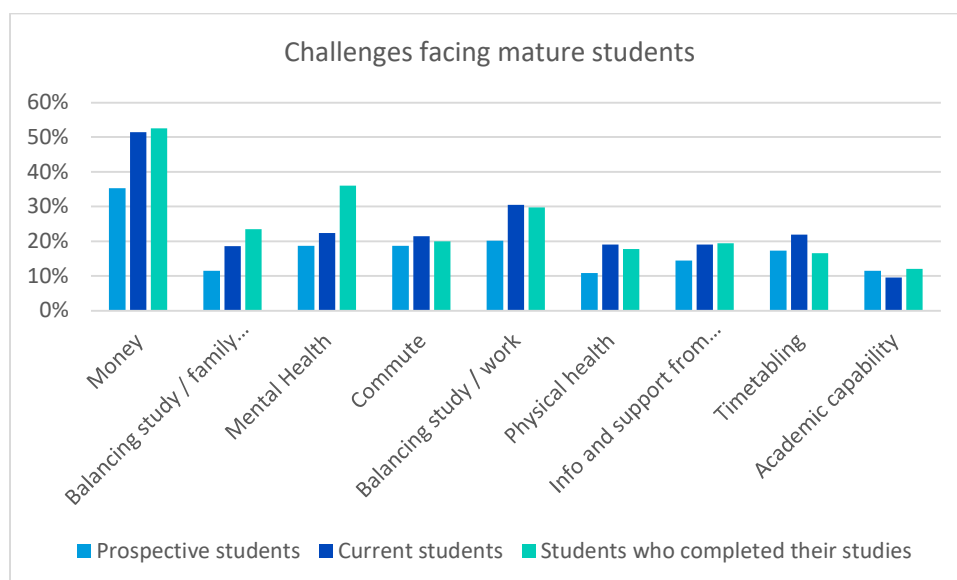
- SCAPP – Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners
- The Scottish Wider Access Managers Group
- ADVANCE Network – Tertiary Education Network for Scotland's Armed Forces Community
- University of Dundee Further Education Nursing Forum

We also maintain regular contact with the Scottish Funding Council and are often asked to consult on information requests from the Scottish Government. For instance, in the past year, we have contributed to the review of the collection of Further Education Statistics (FES) to address the gap in reporting of SWAP students within college returns.

### Issues affecting mature students

Each year we carry out a survey of SWAP East students to evaluate their learning experience. This ensures we remain in touch with the needs of our students, and supports our advocacy work. In the spring of this year, however, we were approached by The Robertson Trust to take part in a research project looking at the issues affecting mature students accessing higher education. This was a wide-ranging survey across over 500 students from both the SWAP East and SWAP West consortiums, made possible by our strong links with our students past and present. Rather than bombard our students, we suspended the student survey for this year, as the findings of the research project provided a wealth of information.

This chart summarises the main concerns students have at every stage of their journey. Whilst the majority of respondents were already either at college or university, and therefore more aware of the actual challenges faced, most respondents had similar views.



Financial challenges tended to lead to other concerns, for instance the amount of part-time work students undertook, usually between 10-20 hrs per week, and the resultant impact on their physical and/or mental health. A lot of students felt this then had a detrimental impact on their studies which is why balancing study and work is evidenced as the second highest challenge. Worryingly 41% of current students said they were doing more than 20hr per week, 12% more than those who'd completed their studies, suggesting a worrying ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Other financial issues, such as the cost of travel and childcare, also had knock-on effects, creating other challenges, such as balancing study and family and mental health.

It should be noted that students with placements feel financial and time constraints most keenly, particularly for Nurses and Paramedics due to the nature of their SAAS support and the structure and requirements of their placements, which can often limit their ability to undertake other paid work.

There is recognition that non-financial support is required and should be tailored to the particular challenges that face mature students. The students believed that peer support would be most beneficial as other mature students would be more aware of the individual situations mature students face. There was also a large number of respondents who identified a physical or learning disability, which can add complicating factors to both their experience of university and their support needs.

These findings were fed back into The Robertson Trust as part of a larger evidence-gathering exercise, alongside work completed by One Parent Families Scotland and the Child Poverty Action Group. The report has detailed breakdowns of the findings and concerns expressed by the SWAP students, and can be found on The Robertson Trust website. They include information on what worked well for the students as well as what else could be done to provide more cohesive and effective support. We would encourage anyone with an interest in supporting mature students to read all three reports.

### The Robertson Trust support packages

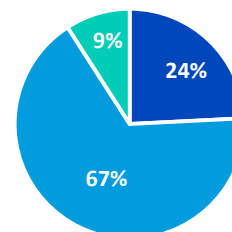
The reports mentioned above were used by The Robertson Trust to create two new support packages aimed specifically at mature students and worth up to £4,250 per year of study, including wrap-around non-financial support: -

- Mature Student Support – students aged between 26 and 45 starting university programmes, with eligibility criteria relating to residency, SAAS support, and [Robertson Trust] priority group membership
- Parent Support – parents aged between 16 and 45 enrolled in university, with a particular focus on child poverty priority family groups - lone parents, parents with three or more children, parents with a child under 1 year old, or parents under 25

The support packages start with the class of 2024-25, entering university in 2025. In total 33 awards were made to SWAP students. We will continue to work with The Robertson Trust to contribute to the non-financial wrap-around support development and delivery.

Split of awards

- Arts and Social Sciences
- Nursing
- Allied Health Professions



### Financial position

Since 2011, SWAP East's core activity has been funded directly by the Scottish Funding Council, paid in a single allocation to both SWAP East and SWAP West via the University of Edinburgh. This is paid on an annual basis in three instalments to cover the current academic year.

SWAP East's share of the SFC funding for academic year 2024-25 was £138,000 (£138,000 in the previous year). In addition, SWAP East and SWAP West was awarded funds of £12,000 by The Robertson Trust to carry out a research project, 70% of which remained with SWAP East. Our audited accounts can be found in the Independent Examiners Report in Appendix E.

Most of our money is spent on salaries. The bulk of our work is about building and maintaining relationships internal and external partners and stakeholders, and direct support of prospective and current students: -

- Net income received
  - SFC annual grant - £137,000
  - Robertson Trust research project - £7,206
- Expenses
  - Staff - £140,676
  - Expenses - £4,492

This resulted in a small overspend in year of £963 which we covered from our small contingency fund. In addition to the funding received from the SFC we receive a lot of invaluable in-kind support from our partners, something we couldn't do without.

We are pleased to report that thanks to negotiations undertaken by the directors of SWAP East and SWAP West, and with the agreement of the University of Edinburgh as fund host, the SFC agreed to consider SWAP as a core part of their work, moving away from annual project funding. This will be in place from AY 2025-26 onwards, with negotiations for actual amounts taking place in January of the year before. Funding for AY 2025-26 has been agreed at £137,000, continuing the trend of flat funding year on year.

## Detailed thank you

We are grateful to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for moving their funding of the SWAP national programme to core rather than project funding, which will allow us to better create our long-term strategies. We are also mindful of the impact of financial restrictions, both on the funding we receive from the SFC and being felt by our college partners. SWAP programmes are, by their nature, more resource intensive than other provision, so we thank them for continuing to deliver programmes despite the many additional challenges, and for the support they continue to provide their SWAP students.

The backing our university partners provide our students remains invaluable, providing much needed input into the success of SWAP students. This includes in-kind support to our Study Skills Events, interview preparation, and IAG on routes into subjects and professions. We are also thankful for the work involved in the continued tracking of SWAP students, which provides valuable insights into the success of our students and the challenges they face. This feedback means we can improve our offering year on year to respond to student needs.

We are appreciative of the support from The University of Edinburgh who provide hosting for the team, and to the Executive members for their continued support, encouragement and guidance.

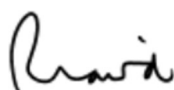
Thanks are also due to The Robertson Trust for the additional funding received which facilitated the research project into the issues facing current adult learners in higher education and, on behalf of our students, for the creation of the support packages for adult learners and single parent students at university.



Neil Speirs  
(Chair)

Date

28 April 2026



Robert Laird  
(Vice Chair)

Date

22 April 2026



Tracey Kerr  
(Director)

Date

22 April 2026



## **APPENDIX A – FULL MEMBERSHIP**

The partnership is made up of: -

- Abertay University, Dundee
- Borders College
- Dundee and Angus College
- Edinburgh College
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Fife College
- Forth Valley College
- Heriot-Watt University
- Queen Margaret University
- Newbattle Abbey College
- North East Scotland College
- Robert Gordon University
- Scotland's Rural University College (SRUC)
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- University of St Andrews
- University of Stirling
- University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)
  - UHI Inverness
  - UHI Moray
  - UHI North, West and Hebrides
  - UHI Orkney
  - UHI Perth
  - UHI Shetland
- West Lothian College

## APPENDIX B – STUDENT POPULATION

### Student enrolment – 10-year trend

	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	SFC Target
<b>Humanities</b>	265	243	244	275	249	262	250	157	166	126	256
<b>Nursing</b>	135	165	170	208	318	496	513	478	438	456	232
<b>Science (&amp; AHP)</b>	103	124	134	121	114	144	137	134	133	122	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>611</b>

### Student enrolment by subject

College	Total	Type of Access programme							Passed programme	
		AHP	Life Sciences	Medical Studies	Physical Sciences	Science	Nursing	Social Sciences	Number	Rate
Borders College	11	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	9	82%
Dundee and Angus College	76	0	11	0	0	0	56	9	58	76%
Edinburgh College	195	0	14	15	16	0	107	43	131	67%
Fife College	91	0	0	0	0	0	91	0	57	63%
Forth Valley College	25	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	16	64%
Newbattle Abbey College	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	8	62%
North East Scotland College	107	33	0	0	0	0	55	19	74	69%
UHI Inverness	25	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	19	76%
UHI Moray	18	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	11	61%
UHI North West and Hebrides	13	7	0	0	0	0	6	0	9	69%
UHI Perth	66	0	22	0	0	4	14	26	37	56%
West Lothian College	64	0	0	0	0	0	48	16	46	72%
	<b>704</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>67%</b>

### Student enrolment and progression by college

			Destination			Did not complete	Withdrew		Failed
College	Enrolled	Completed	HE	HN	Other		Before Xmas	After Xmas	
Borders College	11	9	4	5	0	2	1	1	0
Dundee and Angus College	76	58	50	3	5	18	9	5	4
Edinburgh College	200	136	128	3	5	64	32	24	8
Fife College	91	57	48	6	3	34	19	12	3
Forth Valley College	25	16	14	1	1	9	6	1	2
Newbattle Abbey College	13	8	7	0	1	5	1	4	0
North East Scotland College	107	74	65	0	9	33	17	8	8
UHI Inverness	25	19	18	0	1	6	2	3	1
UHI Moray	18	11	11	0	0	7	6	1	0
UHI North West and Hebrides	13	9	7	0	2	4	3	1	0
UHI Perth	67	38	27	7	4	29	10	10	9
West Lothian College	64	46	38	6	2	18	3	10	5
	<b>710</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>40</b>

**N.B.** – figures don't tie up exactly to 'Student enrolment by subject' table above as this table includes students from previous years who obtained a place at university in the 2025 UCAS cycle – totalling 6 students.

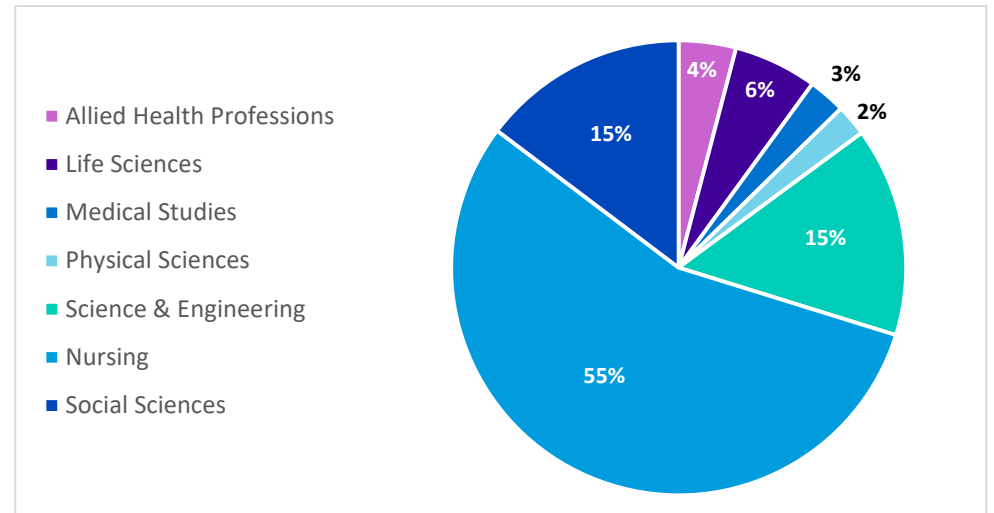
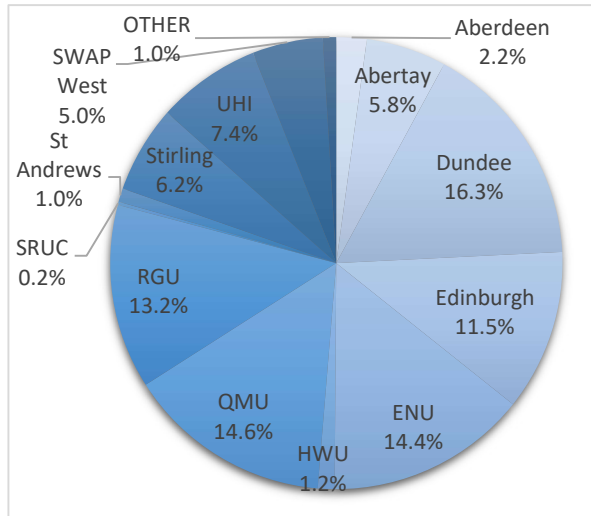
#### Key: -

- HE – University degree
- HN – College HNC/HND
- Other – Other college course, work, destination not known
- Did not complete – total of withdrew and failed

## Student withdrawal analysis

Exit reason	Total Withdrawals				Pre-Christmas Withdrawals				
	Sciences	Nursing	Humanities	Total	Sciences	Nursing	Humanities	Total	
Domestic	2	37	8	47	2	24	6	32	
Health	6	25	9	40	6	13	2	21	
Lost interest	3	14	3	20	1	11	0	12	
Other	3	13	3	19	2	7	1	10	
Course difficulty	0	13	1	14	0	7	0	7	
Employment	0	6	1	7	0	2	0	2	
Finance	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	
Unsuitable	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	
	<b>15</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>87</b>	
Not known	4	28	7	39	3	16	3	22	
	<b>19</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>109</b>	
Share of enrolled	16%	30%	25%	27%	79%	59%	38%	58%	Share of withdrawals

## APPENDIX C – STUDENT PROGRESSION





## **APPENDIX D – STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE**

We are a registered charity and consortium of colleges and universities in the East of Scotland (see membership in Appendix A). Our function is detailed in our constitution and controlled by our Executive Group (EG) which meets twice a year, or as required. Each partner sends one staff member to the EG, and each is entitled to one vote on decisions and at our AGM.

Membership is agreed by the Executive Group by a simple majority of those present who are entitled to vote. Any college or university in the East of Scotland is eligible to be a member, and the EG has the power to invite other bodies and organisations with an interest in working with adult learners to engage in our work as required.

The SWAP East AGM is normally held within 20 weeks of the end of the financial year (1<sup>st</sup> Aug – 31<sup>st</sup> July) and is quorate when at least 1/3 of members are present, including at least 2 colleges and 2 universities. In 2024-25 the AGM was delayed by unforeseen absence, but with the agreement of the chair and vice-chair and convened in full on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026. The director and other staff attend the EGs although do not have voting authority. A chair and vice-chair are elected from the EG members for a period of two years initially, with the ability to renew every two years thereafter. Ordinarily one post holder will be from a college and the other from a university to ensure representation.

Our current chair is a member of staff from The University of Edinburgh, and the Vice-Chair is from North East Scotland College. An extension of their role until December 2026 was confirmed at the AGM in December 2024.

The EG can delegate authority to academic advisory groups or other task groups as they see fit, and as is determined by the AGM. These can include curriculum review groups involving college and university partners to discuss curricula, progression routes and best practice within the subject areas. Information, advice and guidance is often shared between partners that is relevant to the student population, such as the UCAS university application process, student finances and common issues students may be facing.

We work closely with SWAP West at a national level, although exist separately from them as independent registered charities and consortiums. Meetings at national level of the relevant post holders from both consortiums are held at least once a year, and focus on strategic development and national concerns.

SWAP East is hosted by the University of Edinburgh who kindly give us access to office, meeting & event space, manage our HR and Finance processes, host our databases and website and provide IT security and guidance. As always, we are extremely grateful for their continued support.

## **APPENDIX E – INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SWAP-EAST**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 July 2025 which are set out in the report above.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10 (1) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44 (1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### **Basis of independent examiner's statement**

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements -

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 8 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

have not been met or to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Gillian Caughey, CA

Fearless Financials Limited

674 Pollokshaws Road

Glasgow

G41 2QE

13 December 2025

# Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025

				31.07.25	31.07.24
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
Income and endowments from:	Notes	£	£	£	£
<i>Charitable activities:</i>					
Grants	2	137,000	7,206	144,206	138,000
Other		854	-	854	-
<b>Total income</b>		<b>137,854</b>	<b>7,206</b>	<b>145,060</b>	<b>138,000</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities	3,4	137,966	7,206	145,172	131,385
Other	6	847	-	847	840
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>138,813</b>	<b>7,206</b>	<b>146,019</b>	<b>132,225</b>
<b>Net Income/ (expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year</b>		<b>(959)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(959)</b>	<b>5,775</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>					
Total funds brought forward		39,502	-	39,502	33,727
Total funds carried forward		<b>38,543</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38,543</b>	<b>39,502</b>

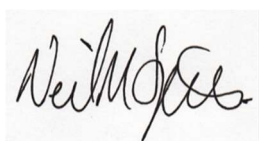
## BALANCE SHEET

Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Prior Year 2024
Current assets	Notes	£	£	£	£
Funds held by Edinburgh University	9	39,404	-	39,404	40,342
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>39,404</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,404</b>	<b>40,342</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Creditors falling due within one year – accruals		861	-	861	840
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>861</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,067</b>	<b>840</b>
<b>Net Current and Net Assets</b>		<b>8,543</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38,543</b>	<b>39,502</b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>					
Unrestricted income funds	11	38,543	-	38,543	39,502
Restricted income funds	10	-	-	-	-
		<b>38,543</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38,543</b>	<b>39,502</b>

The notes on the following pages form part of these accounts.

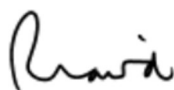
Approved by the Executive at the AGM on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 and signed on their behalf by:



Neil Speirs  
(Chair)

Date

28 April 2026



Robert Laird  
(Vice Chair)

Date

22 April 2026



Tracey Kerr  
(Director)

Date

22 April 2026

## **NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**

### **Note 1 – Accounting Policies**

#### **Basis of preparation and assessment of going concern**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard FRS102, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

SWAP East constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. It is an unincorporated charity registered in Scotland. See Appendix D of this document for further details.

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about SWAP-East's ability to continue as a going concern. The key assumption is that unrestricted funding will continue from Scottish Funding Council (confirmed for the next period). The most significant areas of adjustment and key assumptions that affect items in the accounts are to do with allocating costs to the restricted fund (see notes 3 and 6 for more information).

#### **Funds structure**

Unrestricted income funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use for any purpose in furtherance of the charitable objects.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the funding source. There were restricted funds provided during the year by The Robertson Trust in order to conduct research into the experiences of adults considering, entering, or progressing through higher education in Scotland. This was fully spent by the year end.

#### **Income Recognition**

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

#### **Resources expended**

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis when liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Governance costs include those incurred in the governance of the charity and its assets and are primarily associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Charitable activities include staff costs in running the charity and the costs of delivering projects.



## Note 2 – Sources of Income

The following income was received in the year to 31 July 2025:

Grants	31.07.25	31.07.24
	£	£
Scottish Funding Council (unrestricted)	137,000	138,000
Robertson Trust (restricted)	7,206	-
	<hr/> 144,206	<hr/> 138,000

### Scottish Funding Council

Funding is received from the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education in order to enable SWAP to achieve its core goal of widening access to education for adults returning to education.

In the year to 31 July 2025 £103,000 of the £240,000 received from the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education was transferred to SWAP-West (2024: £102,000), which is accountable for its utilisation. The remaining £137,000 is unrestricted grant income used by SWAP East in both years to run the charity and deliver projects.

During the year, £11,970 of funding was received from The Robertson Trust to conduct research into the experiences of adults considering, entering, or progressing through higher education in Scotland. £4,764 of this funding was transferred to SWAP West and the rest spent on the project by SWAP East during the year.

## Note 3 – Charitable Activities Costs

	31.07.25	31.07.24
	£	£
Staff Costs – Recurring	140,677	130,180
Project Costs	4,495	2,045
	<hr/> 145,172	<hr/> 132,225

SWAP East has completed this year with an overspend of £959. There was a surplus of £5,775 in the year ended 31 July 2024, which has funded most of this year's overspend. The remainder for the surplus is expected to be used in the year to 1 July 2026.

#### Note 4 – Staff Costs and Numbers

Staff costs were as follows: -

	31.07.25	31.07.24
	£	£
Salaries	113,103	102,580
Social Security Costs	13,229	11,191
Employer's Contribution to Defined Contribution Pension Schemes	14,345	16,409
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	140,677	130,180
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The average number of employees during the year, calculated on the basis of a head count, was three (2024 - three).

The total amount of employee remuneration and benefits (including employer pension costs) paid to its key management personnel was £72,605 (2024: £70,394).

No employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) over £60,000.

#### Note 5 – Post-Employment Benefits

SWAP East's employees are treated as employees of the University of Edinburgh. Employees who are in grades UE01-UE05 and are automatically enrolled into a pension scheme under the UK auto enrolment legislation will be enrolled into NEST. Other employees participate in the University of Edinburgh Staff Benefits Scheme (EUSBS) and in The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). The University of Edinburgh operates a salary sacrifice for active staff members of these schemes.

USS is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme and it is not possible to identify SWAP East's (or the University of Edinburgh's) share of the assets and liabilities for this scheme. USS is accounted for as though it was a defined contribution schemes and as a result the costs charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as shown below reflect the contributions in year. A liability for the future contributions payable to USS that relate to a deficit recovery plan agreement is recognised by the University of Edinburgh and the resulting expense is included in its Annual Report and Accounts. There is no separate liability for SWAP East.

The EUSBS scheme is accounted for under Financial Reporting Standard (FRS 102, Section 28: Retirement benefits) and the funded pension costs charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as shown below reflect the service cost calculated under FRS 102. Further information on this pension scheme is provided in the University of Edinburgh's Annual Report and Accounts.

**Note 5 – Post-Employment Benefits (continued)**

The total pension costs for SWAP East were as follows:

	31.07.25	31.07.24
	£	£
USS – contributions paid	13,809	15,786
EUSBS – contributions paid	-	302
NEST – contributions paid	536	322
	<b>14,345</b>	<b>16,108</b>

**Note 6 – Other Costs**

The other costs relate to governance as follows:

	31.07.25	31.07.24
	£	£
Independent Examination Fees	847	840

These costs have been apportioned between the restricted and unrestricted funds based on the level of income received by each fund in the period.

The Independent Examiner did not receive payment for any other services other than for the independent examination.

**Note 7 – Trustees’ Remuneration and Benefits**

There were no trustees’ remuneration, expenses or other benefits for the year ended 31 July 2025 and 31 July 2024.

**Note 8 – Related Party Transactions**

See Note 2 for information on monies transferred to SWAP West, a partner organisation.

SWAP East is hosted by the University of Edinburgh, one of its members. As part of this agreement, the university provides office space and management of finances to SWAP East. See Note 9 and Note 11 below.

**Note 9 – Cash funds**

SWAP East does not hold a bank account. The funds of SWAP-East (2025: £39,404; 2024: £40,342) are held in trust by the University of Edinburgh, our current host partner and the accounts are subject to scrutiny as part of the University’s annual external audit.

**Note 10 – Restricted Funds**

Project grants received are restricted as their purpose is specified by the grant awarding body and any unspent monies may be required to be returned to them. There were no restricted funds in the year to 31 July 2025 or 31 July 2024.

**Note 11 – Reserves Policy**

Reserves of £38,543 (2024: £39,502) are held in trust by the University of Edinburgh. None of these funds were restricted funds in 2025 or 2024. The unrestricted reserves are held in accordance with SWAP EAST’s policy of holding three months of operating costs as reserves.