

Glasgow Caledonian University submission of 17 August 2023

PE2009/C: Ensure Fair Access to Scottish Universities for all Scottish and UK Citizens

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure fair access to Scottish universities for residents in Scotland and the UK by reviewing university business models and Scottish Government funding arrangements.

The number of places available to Scottish domiciled students is determined by the number of funded places the University is allocated by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Glasgow Caledonian is the largest modern university in Scotland, with an intake of approximately 4,500 Scottish students to our undergraduate programmes for the 2023-24 academic year. We are committed to fair access, and take an inclusive approach to recruitment. The teaching unit of resource, which covers all elements of teaching and student support, continues to decrease over time, and many of our students require additional support to succeed, especially during and post-pandemic, but this has not led to any change to our recruitment practice which is always to fill our SFC funded places. Our aim in the medium term is to be allocated a growing number of funded places with growth focused on increasing widening participation in Scotland. The University has an undergraduate population that is in vast majority Scottish-domiciled, with a range of entry points and a strong representation of mature students, and therefore a range of entry qualifications on entry, and from a wide range of backgrounds.

As a leading university for widening participation, over 22% of our entrants are from the most disadvantaged backgrounds compared to the sector average of 16.5% (as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). Glasgow Caledonian has a contextualised admissions policy, and minimum entry requirements (MERs) for those entering with Highers, which aims to recognise the strong disadvantages that some applicants will have faced that will have an impact on their educational attainment. Offers are made that recognise that in these circumstances the attainment of the contextual offer/MERs demonstrates an ability and potential equal to that of the majority of applicants. We also welcome

c1,000 college entrants through direct articulation on to Levels 2 and 3 of degree courses every year, having developed strong partnerships with colleges and ensuring appropriate transition support is in place for students.

Our outreach programmes support recruitment of students from a range of access courses and we promote access through our flexible and inclusive approaches to recognition of prior learning. We have a high proportion of entrants from care-experienced backgrounds within the sector, and we were the first University in the UK to achieve autism accreditation.

The University recruits more Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) students than any other Scottish university, and we are engaging with business partners to expand opportunities for GA recruitment to provide alternative routes to higher education.

Most funded places at the University, and in the sector overall, are available in non-controlled subject areas, with universities determining provision in response to a range of factors, and student demand is a key factor. There is therefore flexibility in the system. However, there are constraints in specific subject areas. For example, we have high demand for some allied health subjects given our excellence in education and research in this area, but the availability of places is constrained by the availability of clinical placements for students.