

SWAP Newsletter

SWAP is a partnership of colleges and universities in Scotland that aims to promote and support access to higher education for adults.



33 YEARS OF TEACHING SWAP STUDENTS: A TUTOR REFLECTS

Pete Smith (pictured above with his SWAP class in 2019) has taught on the Access to Arts, Social Sciences and Primary Education programmes at Edinburgh College since SWAP began, in 1989. Here's what he had to say:

"Having worked with SWAP students for the best part of 33 years, I have been privileged to be part of a team of lecturers, helping people achieve their dream of going to university. We have set teachers, lecturers, lawyers, social workers, community education workers, psychologists, politicians, ministers and historians into the community, and without the SWAP initiative, they might never have had the chance to fulfil their potential ...

... I feel a great deal of satisfaction and pride having been allowed to work with so many highly talented individuals. SWAP, here's to another 33 years (at least!)."

Read Pete's story in full [here](#).



Scottish Wider
Access Programme

Contact us

The SWAP team work Monday-Friday, 9-5.

We can be emailed at:

swap.east@ed.ac.uk (for SWAP East)

swapwest@gmail.com (for SWAP West)

If you want to speak by phone, please email to request a call back.

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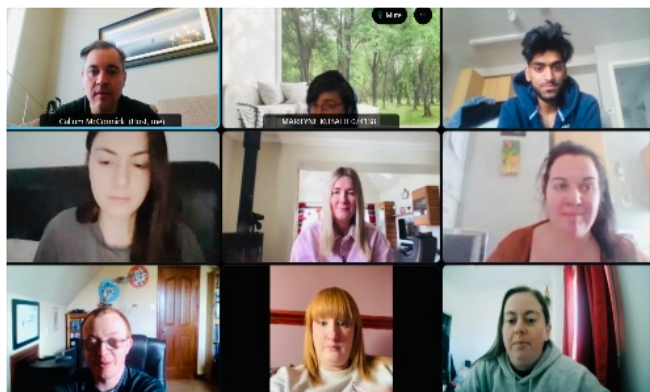
SWAP info

For SWAP-related news, including the articles included in this newsletter, see [here](#).

For reports and publications, see [here](#).

For SWAP eligibility, see [here](#).

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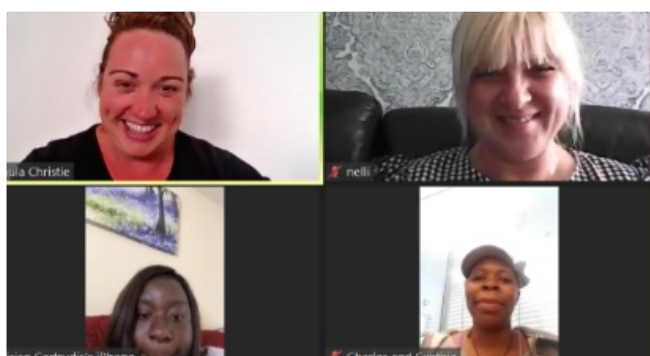


FIRST ONLINE ACCESS PROGRAMME UP AND RUNNING AT PERTH COLLEGE

This new programme started last September with 26 students, some enrolling from as far afield as Orkney, Lewis, Aberdeenshire and East Ayrshire. The aim is to give an opportunity to students who would find it difficult to attend a campus based programme. How is it working? Callum McCormick (top left in photo), the course tutor at Perth College, tells us how he has found the experience so far [here](#).

REFUGEE INTEGRATION PROJECT

SWAP West is participating in an Erasmus+ FETI funded project, collaborating with service providers across Europe, to help increase refugees' core competency skills, with a view to planning a return to education or entering employment. Read more [here](#).



LANGUAGES STUDENT, ROSS FITZPATRICK, SPEAKS ABOUT HOW HIS MENTAL HEALTH HAS BEEN HELPED BY RETURNING TO EDUCATION

Ross Fitzpatrick was a SWAP student on the Access to Languages and Business programme at Edinburgh College in 2020/21. He left school with no grades and became very pessimistic about finding something that he really wanted to do, because of his lack of qualifications. He felt stuck. It took a toll on his mental health; but making the decision to go back into education and enrol on an access programme gave him a goal and a focus to move his life forward. Read more [here](#).

REFLECTIONS OF A STUDENT RETURNING TO EDUCATION DURING LOCKDOWN

David Rattray, aged 51, a father of two, was working in the construction industry in 2020, but lost his job when the pandemic hit the world. David did a S W A P programme at Fife College, which, he said, "opened my eyes and opened doors for me". [Read](#) the full story of David's decision to go back into education and his experiences of having to learn again during lock-down.



SWAP STUDENTS DELIVER HEALTH PROMOTION CAMPAIGN AT WEST COLLEGE SCOTLAND

SWAP's Access to Nursing students, seen here at their Greenock campus, have been busy delivering a health promotion campaign as part of their unit assessment. Students were responsible for their choice of topic, research and method of delivery and showed that it's a great way to showcase learning and share knowledge.

Topics included 'Suicide Awareness', 'Oral Health for Children', 'Essential Skills for Young Families', 'Keep Calm and Beat Diabetes' and 'Domestic Abuse Awareness'. To get over the message, they organised sensory games, mindfulness activities, teeth with blue dye, a sugar content quiz, a messy play table, a lovely snack table, stress reducing activities, Tik Toks, bubbles and more.

It was a great day and many thanks to WCS tutor Vivian Young and to all the students who took part.

WHAT KEY SKILLS DO STUDENTS NEED AT UNIVERSITY?

To help access students prepare for higher education study, SWAP recorded three online group discussions with SWAP students now at university. The topics discussed were, critical thinking and academic writing.

The videos form part of SWAP students' Prep for HE work and can be viewed [here](#) (writing for science and engineering), [here](#) (writing for arts, humanities, social science and nursing) and [here](#) (critical thinking).



EX-ARMED FORCES STUDENT, STEVE PAGE, SPEAKS ABOUT HIS RETURN TO EDUCATION



"I left the Army after just over 14 years in April 2017. I worked a couple of jobs, to bring money in whilst I figured out what I wanted to do

longer term. I realised that having more qualifications would open more jobs up to me. I was nervous about going back into education - worried that being older and a service leaver, I would have nothing in common with anyone and it would be a fairly laborious and lonely process. I couldn't have been more wrong." Read Steve's full story [here](#).



NEW ROUTE INTO VETERINARY MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH FOR SWAP STUDENTS

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies joins the School of Medicine in offering SWAP Access to Medical Studies students a direct entry route.

Dr Gurå Therese Bergkvist, Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions and Senior Lecturer & Clinical Research Associate at The Roslin Institute commented on the new route:

“The veterinary profession is currently undergoing a recruitment and retention crisis. An important step out of this is to further diversify the profession, and it starts in undergraduate admissions. R(D)SVS were delighted to receive our first applications from students on the SWAP programme this admission cycle. We see this as an important step in meeting our goal of producing more diverse graduates that are equipped to take on the new challenges of the profession.”

SPOTLIGHT ON DREW TRAVERS: SWAP GRADUATE AND FILMMAKER

Drew Travers (pictured receiving an award for mentoring SWAP students in 2018) graduated from QMU in 2021 with a 2:1 Honours degree in Film and Media. His short film about mental health, *Talk*, which he wrote, directed and produced himself, has been screened in film festivals across Europe, North America and Africa. This year, it was a finalist in the Beyond the Curve monthly competition in the Best Short Film category and was a nominee in the British Short Film Awards (upgraded from finalist) in the Best Scottish Short category.

You can watch *Talk* by clicking on this [link](#) and entering the password TalkFilm2021!

