



THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN SCOTLAND'S YOUNG APPLICATIONS IN SCHOOLS SCHEME (YASS)



The Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) is the Open University in Scotland's national bridging programme for S6 pupils, supporting them in making the transition from school to university. It offers S6 pupils the opportunity to study an SCQF level 7 (university first year) module in school alongside other S6 studies.

YASS supports the development of a range of skills and knowledge that helps students succeed at university SCQF level 7 and beyond, and also gives them a chance to explore a subject in more depth than would typically be possible at school.

There are currently around 25 individual modules available through YASS, including subjects such as Accounting, Economics, Engineering, Law and language modules, including French, German and Spanish. These are particularly popular in schools where these subjects are not on offer at Higher or Advanced Higher level.

All modules offered within YASS are at SCQF level 7, and like most Open University modules, are taught on a supported open learning basis, so students study the modules online, normally with the support of a tutor, at a time and pace that suits them and fits in with school timetables and other activities.

From an S6 pupil perspective, YASS provides an opportunity to gain confidence from successful completion of an SCQF level 7 module while at school and demonstrate that they can cope with the demands of study at level 7. This helps develop a range of relevant study skills for Higher Education.

Here is what some pupils said:

"It's helped me build communication skills with other students and independent study skills. The content of the course has also helped me to decide if I'd like to continue learning about engineering in the future and it's just helped me build loads of skills that are useful in university."

"I would absolutely recommend the YASS module and that's because it helps you learn initiative, self-discipline and also forward-planning which are not just study skills but also life skills."

The First 15 years of YASS

YASS started as a pilot project in 2007, with 30 pupils participating in that first year. Since then over 10,000 pupils have taken a module through YASS. In 2021 around 1,200 students from 179 schools across Scotland took a module through YASS, and while schools from all 32 of Scotland's Local Authority areas take part, uptake is particularly strong from schools in more remote and rural communities. A key strength of YASS is that it is offered without restriction, regardless of geography or how many pupils from an individual school want to take part, meaning that pupils in the Highlands and Islands have access to the same opportunity and range of modules as students in the central belt. This fits with the Open University ethos of making higher education available and accessible to all.



Steven McGeever, Partnerships Manager at the Open University in Scotland said:



“As the UK’s largest University, and the only HE institution dedicated to flexible distance learning, we are uniquely placed to support pupils and schools across Scotland through the addition of a range of university modules to the S6 curriculum. Taking a module through YASS provides students with the opportunity to study the subject they are intending to take at university and adds to the breadth of their S6 studies. Students also consistently tell us that taking a module through YASS helps develop a broader set of skills for Higher Education, including developing their capacity to learn independently and improving their time management skills. Our survey of participating pupils last year told us that 85% of students felt that their module had given them a good introduction to online study environments, which seems particularly important in the context of the pandemic as traditional universities are moving towards a blend of face to face and online study.”

Understanding the SCQF level and credit value of modules helps students to make an informed decision about taking a YASS course. The modules are either 30 or 10 SCQF credit points, with 30 credit point courses requiring 300 notional hours of study, and 10 SCQF credit point courses requiring 100 notional hours of study. Knowing the value of SCQF credit points helps them plan how a YASS module will fit in around their wider S6 programme of study. As an SCQF level 7 module offered through YASS is at the same level as an Advanced Higher, understanding the SCQF level of the modules and the amount of time required allows the student to think about how challenging a university course is likely to be, and how much time they will need to invest to succeed and really benefit from it.

This is a project supported by the Scottish Government and If you would like to find out more about the YASS programme look at the videos and please share.

[Find out more about what S6 pupils say about the YASS scheme](#)

Schools and Pupils can find out more about taking part in the YASS scheme at <https://www.open.ac.uk/scotland/study/courses-schools-and-early-learning/young-applicants-schools-scheme>