

Experience of delivering an online MSc in Sustainable Mountain Development

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Chair in
Sustainable Mountain Development



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean

Context

- Rapid changes in rural and mountain areas
 - environments, economies, societies
 - need for innovative, integrated approaches
- Demographic changes
 - need to keep younger generations
 - need to 'upskill'
- Sparse populations
 - value of education using ICT
 - interdisciplinary UHI BSc degrees from 1994

Rural and mountain degrees

- Rural and Mountain areas
 - similar issues
- Rural students
 - practitioners in rural development (Local authorities, NGOs)
 - many have 'drifted' in: need for interdisciplinary expertise
- Mountain students
 - practitioners
 - educators
 - career shift
 - mountaineers
 - 'mountain people'

Rural and mountain degrees

- 2004: initial validation: UK
- 2007: revalidation: Europe
- 2009: UNESCO Chair
- 2012: revalidation: Global
 - part of wider MSc programme including MSc Developing Low Carbon Communities / Sustainable Energy Solutions

Rural and mountain degrees

- Specific core modules
 - Mountain: Environmental & social issues in mountain areas
 - Rural: Communities and Nature
 - Other core modules : rural / mountain assessments
 - sustainable development (mountain core)
 - policy analysis (mountain core)
 - developing communities (rural core)
 - local economic development (rural core)
- Possible to leave with Postgraduate Certificate

Rural and mountain degrees

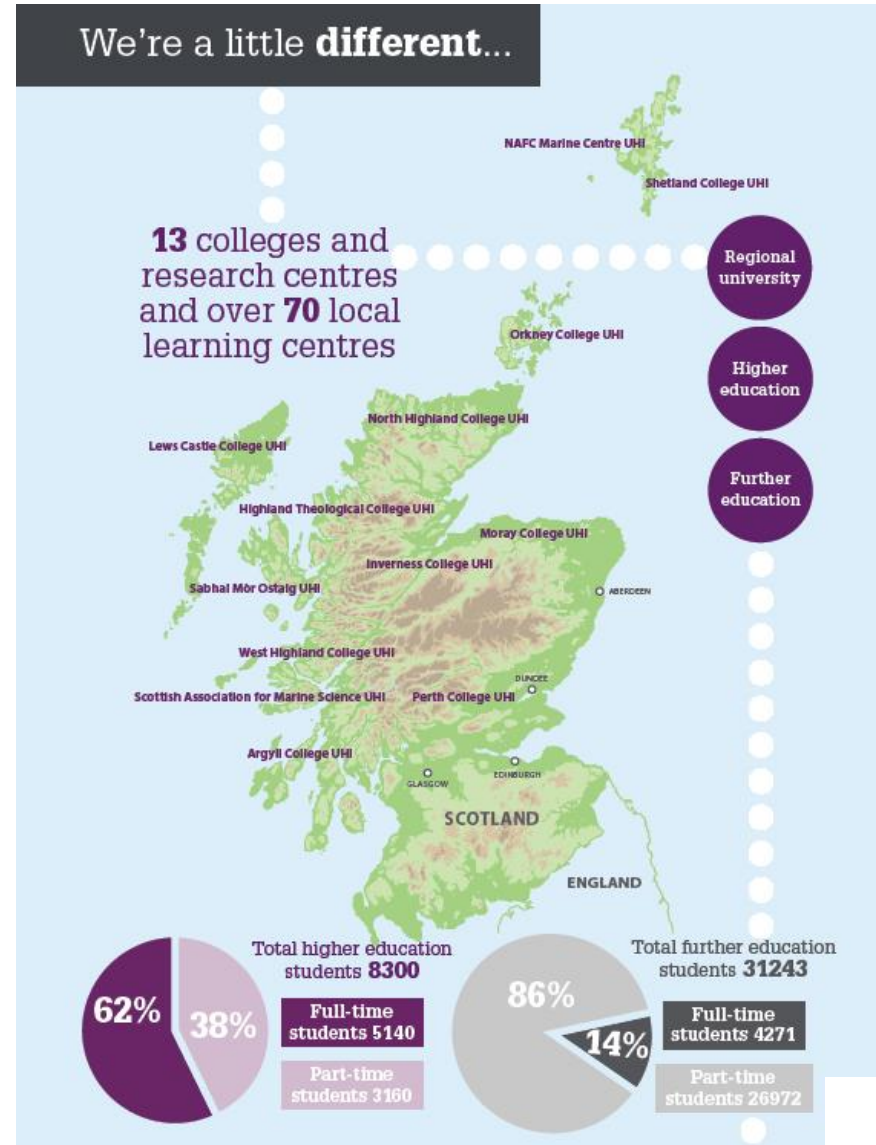
- Optional modules: mountain/rural assessments

- biodiversity management
- Geographical Information Systems
- sustainable land use and energy
- water management
- developing potential through placement
- research methods and techniques
- sustainable tourism
- sustainable deer management
- elective

➤ Possible to leave with Postgraduate Diploma or continue to MSc (15,000 word dissertation)

Module tutors

- Mountain
 - Perth College UHI
- Rural
 - Lews Castle College UHI
- Other modules
 - Moray College UHI
 - Inverness College UHI
 - Orkney College UHI



Developing knowledge and understanding

- Virtual learning environment (Blackboard)
 - weekly academic foundations
 - discussion board
 - videos
 - lectures
- On-line resources
 - UHI: e-journals, e-books, etc.
 - available 24/7
 - student-located
- Students' experience

Where the students live



Graduates/awards since 2004

- MSc: 30
- Postgraduate Diploma: 10
- Postgraduate Certificate: 17

- Sustainable Deer Management module: 29


Marketing

- University website
- Listed on other websites (e.g., 'find a Masters', Mountain Partnership, University of Alberta)
- Adverts in publications
- Brochure at professional meetings, mountain film festivals, etc.



MSc
Sustainable Mountain
Development (online)



A scenic view of a mountain range with a sun flare in the sky. The mountains are layered, creating a sense of depth. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The sun is visible as a bright, circular flare in the upper center of the frame. The foreground shows a dark, rocky slope on the right side.

Thanks for your
attention!