

NFA Report

Graduate Women Scotland maintained a strong public presence and meaningful impact across national and international platforms throughout 2024 and 2025.

We were honoured to take part in Ireland's centenary commemorations, attending both the Dublin celebration and the Belfast UWE Meet and Greet. Our President, Rachel Marsh, and Secretary (and former CIR), Cat Sutherland, represented GWS at the GWI Triennial in Lusaka, Zambia. This was an especially significant moment as we introduced a resolution on equitable rights for postgraduate researchers. We are pleased to report that the resolution passed. We now look forward to working alongside our colleagues in IrFUW and BFWG to carry it forward to government and academic policymakers. We also seconded a resolutions to support peatlands restoration, and we look forward to tackling that in the coming year.

This past year, Cat also attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women in person as a member of both the GWI and UKCSWA delegations, participating in UN sessions and daily strategy meetings with the UK government delegation. Closer to home, GWS engaged in local advocacy, successfully supporting a petition and related efforts to protect Glasgow's MCR Pathways programme from funding cuts, which is an essential mentoring initiative for young people who lack parental or other support. Our annual flagship event, the Research Presentation Days, was hosted at the University of Abertay in Dundee. PhD candidates from a wide range of disciplines presented their work to an audience beyond their immediate academic circles. The event not only enhanced researchers' confidence in communicating their work more widely, but also strengthened GWS membership. We have since welcomed a new cohort of independent members, who now meet virtually with a dedicated focus on advocacy. Additionally, GWS has been contributing to a UKCSWA sub-group's large-scale data project aimed at tracing women's expectations of home and career across an 80-year span.

Locally, our Glasgow affiliation continued its tradition of inviting notable speakers to monthly meetings. Guests included Roddy MacPherson, who spoke about his roles during the period surrounding Queen Elizabeth II's passing, as well as representatives from organisations in the women's and care sectors. Our East affiliation also hosted compelling speakers, including climate activist Laura Anderson, whose work led to Scotland's forthcoming ban on single-use vapes, and leaders from children's charity TOGTS and the National Literacy Trust. These and a range of more social gatherings provided members with opportunities to explore research, policy, and creative engagement.

Consistent communication, hybrid programming, and thoughtful planning helped sustain member participation and connection throughout the year, and we look forward to working with our sisters across UWE in the coming months.