



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

**Update of revised strategic plan
forecast (SPF) for higher education
institutions for 2020-21**

SFC Call for Information

Issue Date: 8 March 2021

Update of revised strategic plan forecast (SPF) for higher education institutions (HEIs) for 2020-21

Issue date: 8 March 2021

Deadline: 16 April 2021

Reference: SFC/CI/04/2021

Summary: This Call for Information requests institutions to complete an update of the revised strategic plan forecast for Academic Year 2020-21.

FAO: Principals, Finance Directors and Board Secretaries of Scotland's universities

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Update of revised strategic plan forecast (SPF) for higher education institutions for 2020-21

Purpose

1. This Call for Information requests institutions to complete an update of the revised strategic plan forecast (SPF) for Academic Year 2020-21. The return should be sent to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) by **16 April 2021**.

Strategic plan forecast

2. The strategic plan forecast (SPF) is an established part of SFC's financial health monitoring framework. We requested that institutions send SFC a forecast by the end of July 2020 covering a shorter period than usually provided in the SPF.
3. A further Call for Information was issued in November 2020 to collect a version of the original SPF revised for the information available at that time, recognising that this continues to be an evolving picture. The revised return provided SFC with a better understanding of the extent of the financial impacts arising from the potential loss of key income streams. The return also enabled institutions to demonstrate how they are working to mitigate financial impacts, including reprioritisation of existing resources and deferral of expenditure, as well as development of additional planning scenarios.
4. A full strategic plan forecast will be required by the end of June 2021 covering the period 2020-21 to 2022-23. A Call for Information will be issued in May.
5. All recent returns build on financial information already provided by institutions and enable SFC to provide further advice on the financial impact across the university sector to both the Scottish and UK Governments.

Return of the updated revised SPF

6. Institutions are required to complete the revised figures for 2020-21, indicated by yellow in the template. The worksheets on Assumptions, Pension Assumptions and Borrowing covenants only need to be completed if there have been changes since the revised forecast return.
7. Guidance for completion of the return can be found in **Annex A** of the previous Call for Information ([SFC/CI/06/2020](#)).
8. Each institution's finance director will be sent an individual return to complete that is prepopulated with the revised SPF figures for 2020-21 to allow a comparison to be made between the revised and updated revised forecasts.
9. Please note that a commentary is required on the financial forecasts which

should cover any differences from the revised SPF. The commentary should also cover the key risks for 2021-22 specifically in relation to the following areas:

- International student fee income.
 - Residences, catering and conferences income.
 - Increases in pay for staff.
 - Assumptions on the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).
 - Changes in financing requirements.
10. It would be helpful if you could provide copies of recent papers presented to your institution's Governing Body relating to the revised forecast if they cover the areas highlighted above.
11. It would also be helpful if you could enter explanations for significant variances on the spreadsheet. As with previous forecast exercises, we may come back to institutions with queries and requests for further details following our analysis of the forecast information.

Information requested

12. Please email an electronic copy of the return in Excel format, and the financial commentary, along with relevant recent papers presented to your Governing Body. If the schedule of Governing Body meetings makes it difficult to achieve this deadline, please provide a draft return by that date with the final approved version to be provided as soon as possible thereafter.
13. Electronic copies of the return and supporting documents should be sent to isg-returns@sfc.ac.uk.

Further information

14. Please contact Andrew Millar, Assistant Director, Finance, tel: 0131 313 6538, email: amillar@sfc.ac.uk or Claire Taylor, Senior Financial Analyst, Finance, tel: 0131 313 6604, email: ctaylor@sfc.ac.uk to discuss any aspect of this letter.



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