Job profile

Post  Senior Policy Analysis Officer (E3)

Directorate  Access, Learning and Outcomes

Line Manager  Deputy Director – Skills and Economic Recovery

Purpose  To support the achievement of SFC’s strategic priorities through development and implementation of key SFC policy. To lead work with government, other agencies and funded institutions to deliver positive outcomes through our investment.

Key responsibilities

1. Lead development work and take responsibility for the implementation and programme management of key national initiatives focused on maximising policy objectives such as skills alignment and economic recovery.

2. Working across institutional and policy boundaries take responsibility for engagement with key partners, ensuring SFC’s policy positions are clearly understood and that there is effective and proactive stakeholder management.

3. Lead engagement with colleges and universities on key national programmes and initiatives, ensuring effective support, challenge and appropriate accountability is at the heart of these relationships.

4. Manage key relationships with and between internal and external stakeholders. Provide advice and guidance to institutions and key stakeholders (both internal and external) as required. Provide advice to senior officers and draft and present a range of policy and strategy papers at committee and board level.

5. Represent SFC externally, chairing and facilitating discussions when required.
Skills, qualifications and experience

Essential

- Strong interpersonal skills, including experience of representation, negotiation, building/developing and maintaining work relationships with internal and external stakeholders, as well as to working flexibly with colleagues in other parts of the organisation.
- Policy development or implementation experience.
- Proven ability to analyse, understand and respond to complex issues in an appropriate manner, demonstrating good judgement and awareness of the audience’s level of understanding.
- High-level oral and written communication skills, including the capacity to research, analyse, understand and respond to complex issues in an appropriate manner.
- Strong organisational and programme management abilities to cope with diverse and changing workload in a politicised environment.
- Good IT skills.
- Degree level education (SCQF level 9) or equivalent experience.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the further and/or higher education sector.
- A good understanding of the current Scottish political and government environment.
- Some experience of dealing with financial/funding information.

Status of Job Profile

This profile has been created to describe, in outline, the nature of appointments at this level. It is an indicative document and the exact nature of these duties will vary with time and from post to post. Post holders will be expected to carry out any work that is commensurate with their grade or that may reasonably be required of them.

Additional information

This post is based within the Access, Learning and Outcomes Directorate which is led by James Dunphy. Around two thirds of the Directorate staff work to support the system of outcome agreements by which SFC currently manages its funding relationships with colleges and universities. Working closely with individual institutions, outcome agreement teams facilitate discussions that lead to the confirmation and publication of outcome agreements.

A growing policy area for ALO is SFC’s work on the skills agenda which involves working closely with the sectors and key stakeholders (for example: Skills
Development Scotland, the Scottish Government, and internal colleagues in our Finance and Policy, Insight and Analytics Directorate) to ensure a balanced and coherent approach is taken in developing the skills of the workforce to meet current and planned future needs. This is a critical time for Scottish Government as we recover from the pandemic and face the challenges of EU exit. Our colleges and universities will play a critical role in the reconstruction of the economy and ensure we sustain a pipeline of educated and skilled people who will be critical to our recovery and Scotland’s future.

Reporting to the Deputy Director, Skills and Economic Recovery, one of the key areas of responsibility for this post on appointment will be to develop and lead key national programmes developed to ensure skills alignment and economic recovery. This will involve the role holder in working closely with other government agencies including Skills Development Scotland. Whilst this post will initially focus on skills and economic recovery for all policy based roles at SFC we expect staff to be flexible and adaptable and willing to take on different policy portfolios to meet the changing requirements within the sectors.

The work of the ALO Directorate is broad and we expect colleagues to bring their talents, enthusiasm and can-do attitude to their work. In return, colleagues can expect opportunities to take on different work portfolios over time, to develop expertise and breadth of knowledge and to work as part of a close-knit team of colleagues focused on securing excellent outcomes for learners. This is an important role and provides an opportunity to make a significant contribution to Scotland’s economic recovery.

SFC is currently carrying out a Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability within the Further and Higher Education sectors. This Review was commissioned by the Scottish Government and is phased in terms of the reporting, recommendations and implementation strategy. The review is drawing heavily upon stakeholder consultation to help shape and inform the future for tertiary education funding in Scotland and colleagues working at SFC will be at the centre of taking this agenda forwards. Details of the review can be found on our website.

**Committed to equality of opportunity**