



T: 0131-244-1826  
E: shirley.rogers@gov.scot

Dr John Kemp  
Interim Chief Executive  
Scottish Funding Council  
Donaldson House  
97 Haymarket Terrace  
EDINBURGH  
EH12 5HD

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Dear John

## **MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATE NUMBERS 2018**

As you are aware, I write to the SFC annually regarding intake numbers for medical schools in Scotland. This follows consideration of the relevant factors by Scottish Ministers taking into account the advice of the Medical Undergraduate Group (MUG) regarding supply and demand.

Consideration of undergraduate numbers for 2018 has taken place against a complex strategic background. Ministers are committed to achieving a sustainable medical workforce for the future which will achieve the aims set out in the Health and Social Care Delivery Plan and 2020 Vision. Current priorities are identifying measures to retain more of our Scottish medical school graduates in Scotland and working for NHS Scotland and increasing supply into GP and other shortage specialties. Specifically, consideration of 2018 numbers has also taken place in the context of the continued delivery of the medical education package (ScotGEM and the 50 widening access places), the commitments in Part 1 of the Health and Social Care Workforce Plan to increases undergraduate numbers by 50-100 over the course of this Parliamentary term and expansion of medical undergraduate education in England.

Following the meeting of the MUG on 08 November, and taking account of the recommendations of that Group, Ministers have agreed that the medical student intake for 2018 should be as follows:

Scot/EU/RUK:	889
International:	64
Total intake:	953

This represents an increase of 55 Scot/EU/RUK places in comparison to last year.

The 55 additional places are to be allocated to the first intake of the ScotGEM commencing in autumn 2018. We had originally anticipated an initial allocation of 40 places for the first year of ScotGEM. Following the letter from Stella Smith to Heads of Medical School dated 26 September inviting bids for the additional places referred to in the Workforce Plan in line with Ministerial objectives, it has been decided that the first intake of Scotgem should be

increased to 55. This is in recognition of Scotgem's alignment with objectives set out in the letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> and the recent announcement by the Cabinet Secretary of the aim of creating at least 800 more GPs over the next 10 years. A further 85 places will be allocated to new initiatives for subsequent academic years.

The student intake for 2018 again includes the 50 undergraduate places to widen access to medicine distributed equally across the 5 medical schools first introduced in 2016. Following advice from the Commissioner for Fair Access, Peter Scott, and with support from the MUG, Scottish Ministers have agreed that university medical schools should be required: (i) To publish an access threshold for SIMD 20 postcode applicants which represents a *significant* adjustment from existing grades and (ii) Publicise that threshold with targeted schools specifically with a view to growing the SIMD 20 applicant pool. These obligations broadly align with actions set out in the Universities Scotland report: Working to Widen Access. Ministers would expect action in respect of (i) and (ii) to be taken over the course of the next calendar year with a view to ensuring that outcomes are in place ahead of the 2019 intake of WA students.

Finally, while Ministers remain cognisant of the intake and important contribution of international fee paying medical students in Scotland, their expectation is that international numbers should not increase beyond existing levels.

I would be grateful if the SFC would now consider and make the necessary arrangements for the 2018 intake. In doing so, it is important that medical schools are informed of the conditions attached to elements of funding set out in this letter. Scottish Ministers continue to welcome efforts towards achieving a more sustainable medical workforce and we will look to the SFC to continue the monitoring and evaluation arrangements set out in the Memorandum of Understanding for the Medical Education Package.

I would be happy to discuss the contents of this letter with you or, alternatively, you can contact Stella Smith in my Directorate on 0131 244 3346 or by e-mail at Stella.Smith@gov.scot.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shirley Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

**SHIRLEY ROGERS**