



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

Additional research funding for universities 2020-21

SFC Announcement

Issue Date: 12 June 2020

Additional research funding for universities 2020-21

Issue date: 12 June 2020

Reference: SFC/AN/08/2020

Summary: Announcement of additional research funding of £75 million for universities in FY 2020-21.

FAO: Principals/Chairs/Finance Directors/Board Secretaries of Scotland's universities

Further information: **Contact:** Stuart Fancey
Job title: Director of Research & Innovation
Department: Research & Innovation
Tel: 0131 313 6559
Email: sfancey@sfc.ac.uk



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

Scottish Funding Council
Apex 2
97 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD
T 0131 313 6500
F 0131 313 6501
www.sfc.ac.uk

Contents

Additional research funding for universities 2020-21.....	4
Background.....	4
Distribution.....	4
Conditions of grant.....	4
Reporting.....	6
Payment profile.....	6
Acceptance of funding.....	6
Further information.....	7
Annex.....	8
Additional research funding for universities 2020-21.....	8

Additional research funding for universities 2020-21

Background

1. On 6 May 2020, the Scottish Government announced a [“£75 million boost for Scottish university research”](#) in order to contribute to the mitigation of effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Scottish university research base, recognising a wide range of impacts to both the income and activity of university research in the short, medium and longer term.
2. The announcement indicated that this one-off immediate intervention is intended to:
 - Protect excellent, world-leading research.
 - Help institutions concentrate fully on planning the long-term future.
 - Help universities focus more effort on the high priority research needed to fight the outbreak and to support society and the economy.
 - Support PhD students whose studies have been impacted.

Distribution

3. In order to direct this additional capital resource to reflect the variety of university activities in research, research training and research translation envisaged to be mitigated in the above announcement, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has decided to allocate the additional £75 million in proportion to individual universities’ share of the sum of their core grants for research and innovation announced in SFC’s [University Outcome Agreement Funding allocations for 2020-21](#).
4. We are therefore allocating the £75 million in proportion to universities’ total Research Excellence Grant, Research Postgraduate Grant and University Innovation Fund, as detailed in Table 6 of the above publication.
5. Individual university allocations of the additional £75 million are set out in an annex to this letter.

Conditions of grant

6. Funding allocations are conditional on the acceptance by each university of, and satisfactory reporting by each university of their response to, the following conditions of grant. An explanation of the minimum reporting requirements is given in *italics* in each case:

- (i) This funding must be used, in Scotland, to mitigate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on research and support responses to it by research. It must not be used for wider or pre-existing financial remediation.

We will require reassurance that the university is able to demonstrate that this additional resource has been used for the purposes identified in this communication and not on non-research related mitigation or in mitigation of financial challenges that pre-dated the pandemic.

- (ii) Universities must use their share of this funding to protect (where possible) jobs at all levels in research to protect Scotland's national capability, including responding to the impact of COVID-19 on the work and careers of postdoctoral researchers on fixed-term contracts.

We will require an account of the number and level (i.e. permanent research staff, postdoctoral researchers, technicians, etc.) of staff jobs where this resource has been used to extend, retain or otherwise protect employment.

- (iii) Universities must demonstrate a collaborative approach, nationally and regionally, wherever that makes research more effective.

We will require evidence of consideration having been given to the value of collaboration as each university adapts its research strategy to the post-COVID-19 circumstance. We will wish to discuss this with universities individually and collectively.

- (iv) SFC must see a demonstrable research emphasis in Academic Year 2020-21 on the fight against COVID-19 and on the social and cultural impacts of the pandemic.

We will require case studies and evidence of institutional strategy that indicate the institutional priority given to the research each university is undertaking to assist in the direct combatting of the pandemic and its social and cultural consequences. This will be specific to each institution.

- (v) Recognising that university research translation is critical for Scotland's post-COVID-19 low-carbon economy, universities must give proper focus to their economic and social role.

We will require evidence in the form of case studies, changes to strategy or otherwise to demonstrate a commitment to the increasing role each university's research will play in economic regeneration and growth, and likewise to social, cultural and health policy where appropriate.

- (vi) Universities should assist PhD students whose studies are affected by COVID-19, and should do so in a consistent manner across the sector (to the extent possible).

We will require to see the policy being adopted within each university with respect to using this resource to assist PhD students whose studies have been affected by COVID-19. We will require a report of the number of PhD students assisted, by funding type, specifically to include (though definitely not be limited to) those PhD students supported by SFC funding. Evidence that universities have, through Universities Scotland groups or otherwise, adopted a common policy (to the extent possible) will be required.

- (vii) Universities should take all reasonable steps to ensure that support for staff and PhD students is done in such a way as to reduce inequality of opportunity across protected characteristics.

We are aware that there is growing evidence of a greater impact from COVID-19 and the lockdown on protected characteristic groups, with potential long-term impacts on research careers. This includes, for example, some evidence of increased inequality of research productivity between male and female researchers. We will require universities to identify the steps being taken, in the process of allocating resource from this award internally, to mitigate negative and promote positive impacts and to advance equality of opportunity and diversity of research focus.

Reporting

7. Universities must provide written reports on progress and delivery against each of the above conditions in paragraph 6 (i)-(vii). The length of the report should be sufficient to reflect the scale and use of the resource allocated.
8. These reports should be received by SFC no later than the end of October 2020, January 2021 and April 2021. The first report should cover all of the conditions of grant above with the second and third report providing updates on delivery. The final report must include a summary account of the use to which each university has put its allocation of funding.
9. SFC will engage with the university concerned if any report fails to provide assurance as required above. Full use of this funding will be conditional on a successful resolution.

Payment profile

10. Funding is for Financial Year 2020-21 with a front-loaded release of funds in three equal instalments in August, September and October 2020.

Acceptance of funding

11. Before any funding can be paid to an individual university, confirmation of its acceptance of the terms and conditions of grant (set out above) should be

provided to SFC from the Principal or an authorised senior officer, no later than 3 July 2020.

12. Confirmations should be sent by email to Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting & Reporting Officer, email: gscotland@sfc.ac.uk.

Further information

13. Please contact Dr Stuart Fancey, Director of Research & Innovation, tel: 0131 313 6559, email: sfancey@sfc.ac.uk.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Fancey', written on a light-colored background.

Dr Stuart Fancey

Director of Research and Innovation

Additional research funding for universities 2020-21

Institution (1)	Additional research funding allocation FY 2020-21 £ (2)
Aberdeen, University of	6,152,383
Abertay University	322,013
Dundee, University of	5,508,099
Edinburgh Napier University	717,739
Edinburgh, University of	23,262,252
Glasgow Caledonian University	1,016,733
Glasgow School of Art	447,455
Glasgow, University of	15,250,213
Heriot-Watt University	4,047,273
Highlands and Islands, University of the	918,965
Open University in Scotland	72,679
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	374,518
Robert Gordon University	533,326
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	162,429
SRUC	1,166,229
St Andrews, University of	5,346,963
Stirling, University of	2,483,766
Strathclyde, University of	6,466,637
West of Scotland, University of the	750,328
Total	75,000,000