



# SFC Announcement

## Funding for counsellors 2019-20

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Summary: Announcement of additional funding in Academic Year (AY) 2019-20 for counsellors in colleges and universities.

FAO: Principals/Directors, Finance Directors, Chairs and Board Secretaries of Scotland's colleges and universities.

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## **Funding for counsellors**

### **Summary**

1. I am writing to announce the allocation of additional funding in Academic Year (AY) 2019-20 to provide additional counsellors in colleges and universities. This funding has been provided and allocated by the Scottish Government.

### **Supporting positive mental health**

2. The funding outlined in this letter should be seen as part of a wider response to supporting positive mental health for students and staff. SFC expects institutions to have a mental health strategy (covering both students and staff) published on their website. This is an Outcome Agreement requirement. Mental health strategies should:

- Include commitment to work with the students' association to develop a Student Mental Health Agreement, by signing up to Think Positive (a Scottish Government funded student mental health project at NUS Scotland).
- Commit to an improvement in retention of students who experience mental ill health and monitor the number of students leaving a course early due to mental ill health.
- Include commitment to partnership working with agencies such as NHS Scotland and the Third Sector.
- Ensure there is access to mental health services that meets the needs of the diversity of their student and staff populations.
- Outline the training provision provided for staff and students on mental health.
- Outline suicide prevention activities, including staff training and pathways to crisis support.
- Evidence campus wide activities to tackle stigma about mental health.

### **Purpose of the funding**

3. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government - *Delivering for today, investing for tomorrow: the Government's programme for Scotland 2018-2019* – outlined that they will begin a radical reform of the way we respond to and treat mental ill health. It states they will take a public health approach focused on prevention and will improve clinical services so that they are more responsive to children, young people and adults and build new networks of support easily accessible from schools, colleges, universities, communities and

workplaces to support good health and wellbeing.

4. The Scottish Government has committed to “providing more than 80 additional counsellors in Further and Higher Education over the next four years”, with an investment of around £20 million.
5. The purpose of this funding is to grow institutions’ existing counselling provision through additional counsellors. Institutions should not remove any of their existing services on receipt of this funding, and are expected to continue to use their core resource to support the same number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) student counsellors in AY 2019-20 onwards as they have in AY 2018-19. In December 2018, institutions were asked to complete a survey to enable SFC to set a baseline from which this growth can be measured.
6. The total funding to be received by the college and university sectors in AY 2019-20 is £3.645 million.

### **Funding and guidance principles**

7. Our aim is to support equity of access to counselling support across colleges and universities, informed by equality principles and shaped by robust monitoring and evaluation data for the first year, such that the student experience of accessing counselling services is comparable across both sectors, recognising that needs and approaches are diverse. We will work with the sectors and stakeholders through the Scottish Government’s Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group to develop this over the four years of the additional counsellor commitment, and reflect this in the approach in future years to allocating funding.
8. The allocation of this additional funding by the Scottish Government has been informed by the following funding and guidance principles:
  - Funding should be allocated equitably across each sector based on the number of students.
  - Funding decisions should not unfairly penalise institutions that have already invested in counselling provision but can still evidence unmet demand.
  - Funding decisions should prioritise institutions with no or very low access to counselling services.
  - Funding should consider the number of students at each institution on the basis that mental health does not discriminate and can impact on anyone at any time.
  - Part-time students should have the same recourse to support as full-time students.
  - The funding should ‘buy’ counsellors that are dedicated to students and, although these counsellors could be employed by the institution, it is not a requirement of the funding (if alternative arrangements ensure the equivalent additional counselling provision).

- The funding should cover full-time, part-time and virtual access to counsellors.

### **Funding allocations**

9. Funding has been allocated to colleges and universities by the Scottish Government based on a range of factors including: student numbers, mental health and wellbeing indicators, and geography. The funding methodology can be found in [Annex A](#).
10. The assumed cost per FTE counsellor is based on up to £45k per annum. A breakdown of funding for individual colleges and universities is shown in [Annex B](#).

### **Conditions of funding**

11. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated; that is, for the provision of additional counsellors. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case and the institution undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires. A definition of Counselling (for the purposes of this funding) is provided in paragraph 10 of the baseline survey in [Annex D](#).
12. Evidencing outcomes for students from counselling provision is a requirement, utilising measurement tools that have been validated for assessing counselling outcomes. We may wish to approach institutions regarding aggregate outcome data on the impact of the investment.
13. A principle of collaboration underpins our approach to funding allocations, and we would expect to see evidence of developing collaboration across institutions with regard to counselling services, and in relation to developing partnerships with NHS Scotland, Health and Social Care Partnerships, and third sector counselling organisations, when planning and investing in counselling provision.
14. All institutions (or in the case of a multi-college region the Regional Strategic Board) must provide a short outline plan on how they intend using their funding to SFC prior to committing the funds. The plan should clearly outline how additional counsellors will be recruited, and specify whether they will be employed directly by the institution, or if the funds will be used to provide access to external counselling support. The plan should also articulate some of the actions institutions may want to undertake to support enhanced counsellor provision. A reporting template for the Counsellors Outline Plan can be found in [Annex C](#).
15. All institutions must utilise, or source, suitable premises for their counselling services. These premises must be appropriate and accessible for all students seeking support. This does not apply to students accessing virtual counselling outwith the institution's premises.

16. All institutions should update their baseline survey to monitor progress towards the Scottish Government’s commitment of providing 80 additional counsellors. The updated survey and accompanying guidance can be found in [Annex D](#). Please note that this must be completed by all institutions. A Regional Strategic Board may wish to co-ordinate this in their region but we require a baseline survey for each college.
17. Please provide both the outline plan and updated baseline information to Fiona Burns, email: [fburns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:fburns@sfc.ac.uk), copied to your Outcome Agreement Manager by **30 November 2019**. Please note that as this is a condition of grant failure to provide this information could impact on your funding.
18. All institutions should note that SFC will request quarterly updates on the number of counsellors in place. This is to inform progress towards the 80 additional counsellors committed to in the Programme for Government. Please note that to inform progress and next steps this information and the baseline and outline reports may be shared with the Scottish Government’s Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group.<sup>1</sup>

### Payment of funds

19. SFC will make payment of funding to universities in AY 2019-20 in line with the following profile:

Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20
0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.0%	14.0%	14.0%	14.0%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%

20. Colleges should drawdown funding as required with up to 54% of their funding allocation to be drawn down in FY 2019-20 (by end of March 2020) and no more than 46% to be drawn down between April 2020 and July 2020.

### Acceptance of grant

21. Institutions are invited to formally accept this offer of funding by writing to Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting & Reporting Officer, email: [gscotland@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:gscotland@sfc.ac.uk) by **15 November 2019**.

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<sup>1</sup> The remit of the Working Group is to collaboratively support the implementation of the Programme for Government commitments on additional counsellors and the development of an integrated approach to student wellbeing in colleges and universities.

## Further information

22. Should you require any further information, please contact Fiona Burns, Assistant Director, Access & Outcomes, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: [fburns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:fburns@sfc.ac.uk), or Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer tel: 0131 313 6570, email: [eroberts@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:eroberts@sfc.ac.uk).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. MacDonald". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

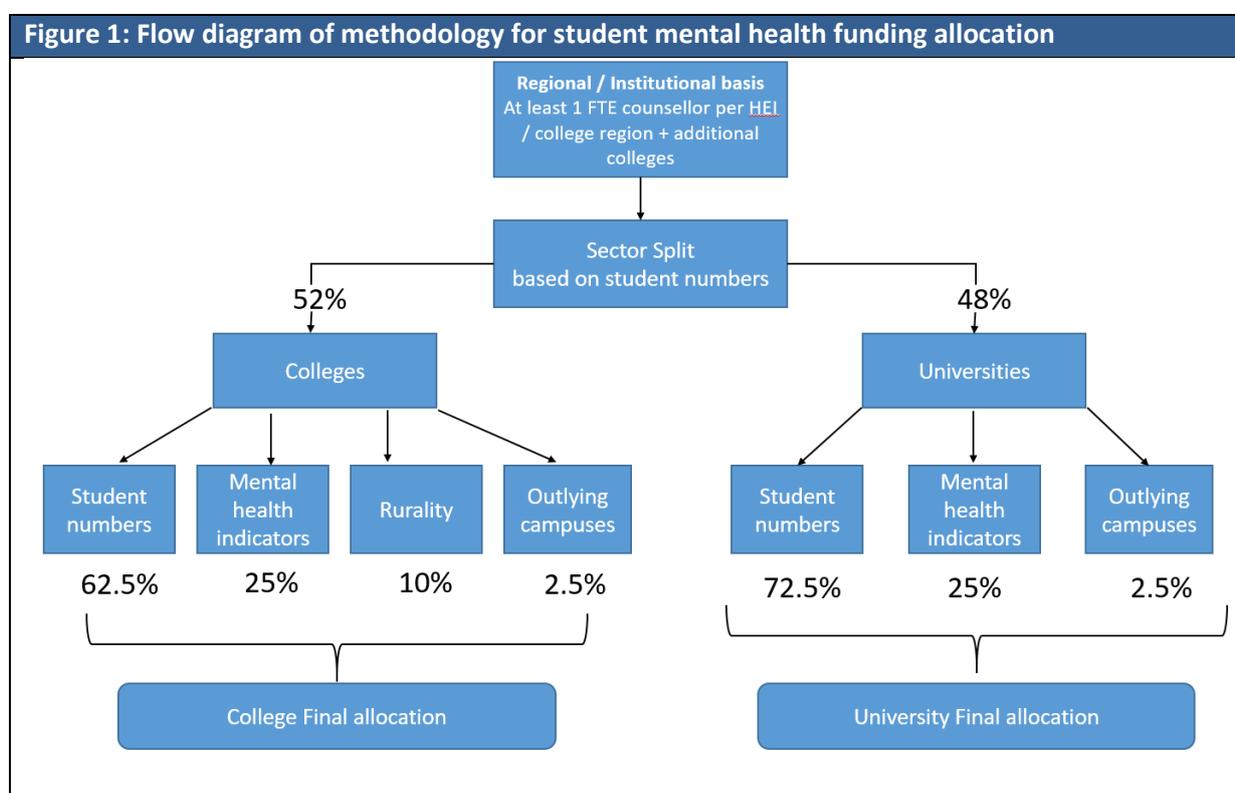
**Lorna MacDonald**  
Director of Finance

## Methodology note for the funding for counsellors in colleges and universities Scottish Government: Advanced Learning and Skills Analysis – August 2019

1. This note provides an overview of the methodology that was applied by the Scottish Government to allocate funding for 2019-20 to provide additional counsellors in colleges and universities

### Methodology

2. Figure 1 below highlights how the money has been allocated with information on the rationale behind the steps outlined in the text below.



3. Each college/region and university is allocated with funds to hire at least one counsellor.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, for those college regions with multiple colleges, further funds are allocated based on their student numbers. After the above allocation, the remaining funds are split 52% to the college sector and 48% to

<sup>2</sup> Due to the size of their student population, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Newbattle Abbey College have been allocated funds for the equivalent of 0.25 FTE counsellors for this step.

the university sector based on their relative proportion of students.<sup>3</sup> Student numbers will be the main driver of demand for counselling services. Therefore, this accounts for the largest proportion of the funding allocation. The funding will be allocated based on the relative size of the college/region/university student population.

4. As another driver of demand, the allocation is informed by measures of wellbeing and the prevalence of mental health issues within each college region<sup>4</sup>. Both the college and the university sectors have been allocated the same proportion of the remaining funds based on mental health factors. This has been split between a regional perspective, based on large-scale Scottish health surveys, and an institutional perspective, based on self-declared data from college and university entrants.<sup>5</sup>
5. Additional funds were allocated to take account of potential additional supply costs for counsellor provision for colleges in Scotland's rural areas or for institutions with outlying campuses. For colleges, the funding allocated to take into account rurality has been distributed based on the same proportions as the 2017-18 SFC Rural Premium. This is based on the Scottish Government's eight-fold urban rural classification.<sup>6</sup>
6. For both colleges and universities, funding for outlying campuses has been allocated to the main institution as a top-up for providing services to campuses outside the regional headquarters, with the distribution based on the number of outlying campuses in each sector.

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of the Scottish Government's funding allocation model, UHI and SRUC are being treated within the college allocation, as they have a higher percentage of FE students. The HE students at these institutions have therefore been included in their college/region student numbers.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of the funding methodology SG utilised the existing college regions.

<sup>5</sup> Given that the Open University in Scotland and SRUC are not associated to one particular college region, it was not possible to provide additional funds based on the regional mental health factors. They have however been allocated demand driven funds based on their institutional mental health score, on the principle of one additional counsellor per institution and on student numbers.

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Government Urban / Rural Classification, 2016  
<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>.

## Funding allocations for 2019-20

College/region allocation of funding for counsellors		
College/Region	Total funding allocation*	No. of counsellors (FTE)**
Ayrshire College	£103,000	2.29
Borders College	£81,000	1.80
Dumfries & Galloway College	£86,000	1.91
Dundee & Angus College	£120,000	2.67
Edinburgh College	£122,000	2.71
Fife College	£124,000	2.76
Forth Valley College	£92,000	2.04
Glasgow Region	£312,000	6.93
Highlands & Islands Region***	£292,000	6.49
Lanarkshire Region	£130,000	2.89
Newbattle Abbey College	£12,000	0.27
North East Scotland College	£111,000	2.47
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	£14,000	0.31
SRUC****	£101,000	2.24
West College Scotland	£122,000	2.71
West Lothian College	£83,000	1.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,905,000</b>	<b>42.33</b>
<p>* Numbers rounded to the nearest £1,000.  ** Rounded to the nearest 0.01 FTE counsellor.  *** Includes funding for UHI's HE students.  **** Includes funding for SRUC's HE students.</p>		

<b>University allocation of funding for counsellors</b>		
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Total funding allocation*</b>	<b>No. of counsellors (FTE)**</b>
Aberdeen, University of	£93,000	2.07
Abertay Dundee, University of	£63,000	1.40
Dundee, University of	£112,000	2.49
Edinburgh Napier University	£93,000	2.07
Edinburgh, University of	£167,000	3.71
Glasgow Caledonian University	£123,000	2.73
Glasgow School of Art	£56,000	1.24
Glasgow, University of	£191,000	4.24
Heriot-Watt University	£93,000	2.07
Highlands & Islands, University of the***	-	-
Open University in Scotland	£100,000	2.22
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	£64,000	1.42
Robert Gordon University	£87,000	1.93
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	£51,000	1.13
SRUC***	-	-
St Andrews, University of	£87,000	1.93
Stirling, University of	£94,000	2.09
Strathclyde, University of	£150,000	3.33
West of Scotland, University of the	£116,000	2.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,740,000</b>	<b>38.65</b>
<p>* Numbers rounded to the nearest £1,000.  ** Rounded to the nearest 0.01 FTE counsellor.  *** Funding for UHI's and SRUC's HE students are included within the college allocation.</p>		

### Counsellors Outline Plan

Please return this form to Fiona Burns, email: [fburns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:fburns@sfc.ac.uk), copying in your Outcome Agreement Manager.

<p><b>1.</b> Please outline how you will be using these funds to resource additional counsellors including how many additional counsellors you are intending on resourcing and how they will be recruited.</p> <p>Please include details of whether the additional counsellors will be employed directly by your institution, or if the funding will be used to secure access to external counselling resource.</p>	
<p><b>2.</b> Please outline how you will use this funding to support mental health provision within your institution/region.</p>	
<p><b>3.</b> Please outline who was included and consulted in the development of your mental health provision plan.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b> Please provide details of how you will measure the effectiveness and impact of this additional service and how you will continue to measure this.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b> Please outline the steps you have taken or will take to collaborate with other institutions, local NHS, Health and Social Care Partnerships and the third sector.</p>	

## **Mental health counsellors baseline survey**

### **Purpose**

1. Institutions are asked to complete the following information to enable SFC to determine growth from the AY 2018-19 baseline. The Scottish Government is expecting growth of more than 80 additional counsellors over the next four years.
2. The information provided should cover AY 2018-19. We are asking for this again to enable us to have a full academic year which will allow us to establish a more accurate baseline. Institutions will be expected to report annually on the full previous academic year to allow us to measure growth from this baseline.
3. Please note that we need this information for all colleges and universities (including all colleges within a multi-college region). We do recognise that there may be collaborative approaches within and between multi-college regions (and outwith), therefore please ensure that your Outcome Agreement Manager is aware of these and include it in your Mental Health Strategy.

### **How we will use this information**

4. Please note we will ask for this information annually.
5. We expect that the additional funding allocated from AY 2019-20 should be used to grow resource from the baseline position at each institution and not fund what is already in place. Unless you inform us otherwise, we will assume your institution will have:
  - Continued to support the same number of FTE student counsellors in AY 2019-20 onwards as you have in AY 2018-19.
  - Used your core resource to support those staff.
6. The additional funding allocated from AY 2019-20 will therefore be used to grow that resource from that position at your institution.
7. A lack of progress may result in funds being clawed back and/or future funding being reallocated.
8. We may also ask to visit your institution to discuss your approach in more depth to help us develop the policy and would welcome invitations to discuss your work in more depth.

9. SFC will also request an update on the number of counsellors employed at your institution on a quarterly basis.

### **Definition of counselling**

10. The Scottish Government has drawn on the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) definition of Counselling as “A specialised way of listening, responding and building relationships based on therapeutic theory and expertise that is used to help clients or enhance their wellbeing.” Please note that all additional counsellors must be on a register accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA). This means that the registered counsellors have met the accredited register’s professional standards to practise. See the list of PSA accredited registers on its website - <https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/what-we-do/accredited-registers/find-a-register>.
11. Institutions which have identified qualified counsellors who cannot evidence being a registrant on a PSA accredited register should discuss this with Fiona Burns before committing the resource. This may be the case when the institution is investing in a specific type of counselling support. We would expect these cases to be rare.
12. **Please use this definition and PSA requirement when completing the form.** We appreciate that institutions will have various means of supporting their students’ mental health and student counsellors are only one means of providing support. If you have counsellors who are members of professional bodies whose register is not accredited by PSA we would be grateful if you could let us know.

### **Further information**

13. If you have any questions in relation to the information being requested, please contact Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer tel: 0131 313 6570, email: [eroberts@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:eroberts@sfc.ac.uk) or Fiona Burns, Assistant Director, Access & Outcomes, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: [fburns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:fburns@sfc.ac.uk). Please return this form to Fiona Burns, email: [fburns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:fburns@sfc.ac.uk), copied to your Outcome Agreement Manager, **by 30 November 2019**.

## Required information for setting an updated baseline

When completing the form please use the definition of counsellors provided in paragraph 10 of this annex. The reporting period for this survey is AY 2018-19.

1. In AY 2018-19 how many student counsellors did you employ?

Name of college <sup>7</sup> or university	
Number of full-time counsellors employed by the institution.	
Number of part-time counsellors employed by the institution.	
<b>FTE figure for the total number of counsellors employed.*</b>	
Approximate number of students (regardless of mode of study) that this resource was intended to support.	
Total cost of employing 1 FTE student counsellor (please include details of salary and associated on-costs).	
Total cost for the institution to employ student counsellors, including on-costs.	

**\*Please note we will use this figure as our baseline.**

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<sup>7</sup> Please note that we need this information for all colleges. We recognise that there may be collaborative approaches within and between multi-college regions (and out with) - please ensure that your Outcome Agreement Manager is aware of these and include it in your Mental Health Strategy.

2. It may be that your college or university does not directly employ counsellors or can supplement the above counselling support from outwith the college or university. Please briefly outline this support, including the numbers of FTE equivalent counsellors that your students could access in 2018-19.

Providers	Description of Support	Hours of Counselling Provided	FTE Equivalent Counsellors	Number of Students Accessing Support

3. It may be that your college or university provides mental health support outwith counsellors. Please briefly outline this support including, where possible, the roles involved in this support (e.g. mental health nurses) and the numbers of FTE staff that your students could access in 2018-19.

Please provide details of the role title and number of non-counselling staff employed to deal with student mental health and wellbeing issues (e.g. Wellbeing Advisers, Mental Health Nurses/Coordinators).	Staff role/s: Number (FTE)
	Staff role/s: Number (FTE)
	Staff role/s: Number (FTE)

4. In AY 2018-19, how many hours of counselling support were being provided per week?

Number of hours of counselling support provided to students by counsellors directly employed by the institution (per week)	
Number of hours of counselling support provided to students accessing counsellors through the institution but not directly employed by them (per week)	
How many hours of support provided by non-counselling staff (e.g. Wellbeing Advisers, Mental Health Nurses/Coordinators)?	

5. In AY 2018-19 how many students accessed counselling support?

Number of students (regardless of mode of study) that accessed counsellors directly employed by the institution.	
Number of students (regardless of mode of study) that accessed counsellors through the institution but not directly employed by them.	
Number of students (including full time, part-time and distance learners) who requested or were referred for counselling support but were not offered or given access to a counsellor, excluding students who were offered but refused counselling.	
Number of students that accessed support from non-counselling staff (e.g. Wellbeing Advisers Mental Health Nurses/Coordinators)	

6. In AY 2018-19 how much counselling was offered?

Did you have a standard offer of counselling sessions for your students?	
If you answered yes to the above question, please outline how many sessions each student was offered. Please also provide any additional information you think would help us understand how support was offered in your institution.	
If you answered no, please outline how you decide on how many sessions/how much time to provide to students.	
Please outline details of activities to complement the counselling support offered by your institution (e.g. online resources, peer support, Big White Wall etc).	

7. In AY 2018-19, what were the waiting times for support?

In AY 2018 -19, were there students on a waiting list for counselling provision at the institution?	
If you answered yes, please outline the number of students that were waiting for support.	
If you answered yes, please outline the average wait time and the maximum wait time.	

8. Please outline your attempts to manage and/or mitigate waiting times (this can include information about non-counselling provision).

9. Please provide any additional information you think would help us understand demand at your institution in AY 2018-19.

10. Please briefly outline your observations on any changes in the demand for counselling at your institution since the time of last reporting.

11. Please use this section to provide any additional information you may want us to be aware of.

12. Did you engage with (please select all that apply):

- Other institutions
- Local NHS services
- Local third sector organisations
- Other

*Please provide details:*

13. Please provide details of contacts at your institution in relation to:

**Updating the baseline figure of the number of counsellors employed**

Name	
Position	
Direct line	
Email	

**The demand for counselling and mental health support at your institution**

Name	
Position	
Direct line	
Email	

**For multi-college regions only** - please provide a designated regional/Regional Strategic Body contact:

Name	
Position	
Direct line	
Email	

This information needs to be signed off by the Principal. Please confirm that this information has been approved for SFC to use.

Name of institution	
Principal (please print name)	
Signature (electronic is acceptable)	
Date	