



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

Global Challenges Research Funding: finalised allocations for FY 2020-21

SFC Announcement

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Summary: Finalised allocations and guidance on Global Challenges Research Funding for universities in Financial Year 2020-21

FAO: Principals / Finance Directors of Scotland's universities

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Global Challenges Research Funding: finalised allocations for FY 2020-21

Background

1. I am writing to announce the finalised Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) allocations for Financial Year (FY) 2020-21.
2. The GCRF is a £1.5 billion UK Government fund to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries through:
 - Disciplinary and inter-disciplinary research.
 - Strengthening capacity for research and innovation within both the UK and developing countries.
 - Providing an agile response to emergencies where there is a clear research need.
3. The Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) strategy for world-leading research includes an ambition to increase the global reputation and standing of our universities, and their international connections and collaborations.
4. The UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) is allocating £13,216,359 to SFC from the GCRF in FY 2020-21. This is a revised figure from that announced in the [updated AY 2020-21 University Outcome Agreement Funding allocations](#) published in June. This is a result of an Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget adjustment across UK Government, undertaken in response to UK GNI in 2020 being lower than expected.
5. Since FY 2016-17, SFC has offered allocations of GCRF to all Scottish universities in proportion to their Research Excellence Grant (REG). GCRF has now supported more than 800 projects at Scottish institutions, involving over 80 developing country partners. This demonstrates the breadth, creativity and global reach of the Scottish research community. The finalised FY 2020-21 GCRF allocations for each university can be found at Annex A. The payment in full of these allocations is contingent upon SFC receiving from BEIS the full allocation expected of £13,216,359.

Principles of the GCRF

6. The overarching aim of the GCRF is to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries. The Fund forms part of the UK's ODA commitment, and is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). GCRF allocations must be used according to ODA principles, which state that only research directly and

primarily of benefit to the problems of developing countries may be counted as ODA. (ODA/GCRF Guidance).

7. Any benefit to Scotland or the UK from GCRF activity must be a secondary consideration. GCRF activity must also comply with ODA guidelines by working with and supporting development in countries and territories on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)'s list of ODA recipients. Any part of a university's GCRF allocation that is not spent on ODA-compliant activities will be recovered. All spending using GCRF allocations must also be in line with the broader GCRF strategy developed by the delivery partners (UK Strategy for the GCRF).

Strategies

8. SFC invited institutions to develop GCRF strategies in FY 2018-19 to encourage them to take a longer term view of their ODA research activity, setting out how they would prioritise use of the GCRF allocations that SFC expected to receive from DBEIS. The strategies also provide the basis for SFC monitoring how GCRF funds are spent on ODA-compliant activity and provide assurance to DBEIS on this matter. The strategies are published on the [SFC website](#).
9. SFC assumes institutions will continue to take forward the 3 year GCRF strategy they submitted in FY 2018-19. There is no requirement to resubmit strategies unless these have changed. In such cases, institutions should notify David Beards, Senior Policy Officer, Research and Innovation, tel: 0131 313 6520, email: dbeards@sfc.ac.uk.

Reporting

10. Universities are required to report annually to SFC against their GCRF strategies. These reports should provide a breakdown of how GCRF allocations were spent, including information on the types of activity funded, the developing countries involved and the impacts and outputs produced. Reports should cover progress against intentions outlined in institutional strategies, and explain how activities align with the strategy (or why any activities have diverged from the strategy). Guidance and a template for these reports can be found in Annexes B1 and B2.
11. Although formula GCRF is distributed by SFC on a Financial Year (FY) basis, institutions have discretion to manage the allocation across the Academic Year (AY), and the annual GCRF reports should reflect activity throughout the AY. Exceptionally, due to the disruption to research activity caused by COVID-19 in 2020, institutions have until January 2021 to submit their annual reports for AY 2019-20.
12. Completing the annual monitoring process and reporting on strategies is a condition of grant. If an institution fails to participate successfully in the

monitoring process, or if any of its activities are assessed as not being ODA- compliant, SFC reserves the right to recover funding and/or to reduce future GCRF allocations.

Safeguarding

13. It is a condition of GCRF funding that:

- The institution has procedures in place for the prevention, reporting and investigation of incidents of staff misconduct. ('Staff' covers university employees and any person engaged by the university using GCRF.)
- The institution takes all reasonable steps to investigate allegations or suspicions of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment and takes appropriate corrective action, including disciplinary action, against relevant staff or others employed, and to keep SFC and relevant authorities informed of the progress of the investigations as appropriate.
- Where incidents have been notified to OSCR, the institution advises SFC that a report has been made (but SFC should not be informed of the detail of the incident itself).

14. SFC will keep abreast of the reporting and investigation of incidents through our regular liaison with OSCR.

Payment profile and offer of grant

15. The finalised FY 2020-21 allocations of GCRF will be paid to institutions in two tranches: 50% in October 2020 and 50% in February 2021. The payment in full of the second allocation is contingent upon SFC receiving from BEIS the full allocation expected of £13,216,359.

16. Universities wishing to accept their GCRF allocation should contact Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting and Reporting Officer, email: gscotland@sfc.ac.uk, responding to this offer of grant by 16 October 2020.

Further information

17. Please contact David Beards for further information, tel: 0131 313 6520, email: dbeards@sfc.ac.uk.



Dr Stuart Fancey

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