



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

**Updated estimates of non-EU international  
student fee income, and arrangements for  
financial returns for AY 2020-21**

**SFC Call for Information**

Issue Date: 16 October 2020

## Updated estimates of non-EU international student fee income, and arrangements for financial returns for AY 2020-21

Issue date: 16 October 2020

Reference: SFC/CI/09/2020

Summary: This Call for information requests institutions to provide updated estimates of non-EU international student fee income and provides clarification on financial returns for the remainder of Academic Year 2020-21.

FAO: Principals, Finance Directors and Board Secretaries of Scotland's universities

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## **Updated estimates of non-EU international student fee income, and arrangements for financial returns for Academic Year 2020-21**

### **Purpose**

1. This Call for Information requests institutions to provide updates of estimated non-EU international student fee income for 2019-20 and 2020-21. Clarification is also provided on arrangements for financial returns for the remainder of Academic Year (AY) 2020-21.

### **Background**

#### ***Financial monitoring framework***

2. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, universities provided two main financial returns to SFC in the course of the year:
  - Forecasts submitted at the end of June (outturn forecast for the current year and forecasts for the following three years); and
  - Annual accounts submitted at the end of December (audited financial statements and supporting reports by institutions' audit committee, internal and external auditors).
3. As result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SFC requested institutions to provide additional financial returns, comprising updated forecasts for 2019-20 and 2020-21, by the end of April and the end of July 2020. These replaced the main 2020 Strategic Plan Forecast return.
4. [SFC Guidance](#) provided clarification on revised deadlines for the 2019-20 annual report and accounts, Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) return and arrangements for the TRAC(T) return. This confirmed the availability of a two month extension, to 28 February 2021, for the 2019-20 annual report and accounts and associated audit reports. Where an institution needs to make use of the extended time period for the annual accounts return, the 2019-20 TRAC submission should be submitted within 30 days of that return and no later than 31 March 2021. The communication also confirmed that Institutions will not be required to submit a TRAC(T) return for the 2019-20 year.

#### ***Sustaining University Research Expertise Fund***

5. The UK Government Sustaining University Research Expertise (SURE) Fund is a package to support institutions to continue world-class research and innovation activity. The funding package, announced on 27 June 2020 and comprising low-interest loan financing supplemented by a small amount of grant support,

is expected to compensate for up to 80% of non-EU international student fee losses, capped at each institution's non-public research income.

6. Formal guidance to institutions on how to apply to receive funding will be published very soon with a final deadline for submissions anticipated in early December 2020. It is expected that funding packages will be agreed and disbursed before the end of March 2021. For most institutions, the loss in non-EU international student fee income will be the metric which determines the overall support available.
7. As part of the application and assessment process, it is planned to make use of existing data held by Funding Bodies and minimise the burden on institutions as far as possible. However, we are requesting updated non-EU international student fee forecast data for 2019-20 and 2020-21 to contribute to an assessment of the overall level of support available to individual institutions. I would therefore be grateful if you could complete the template in [Annex A](#) and return it to SFC by **28 October 2020**. You should note that this data will be shared with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to support the administration of the SURE Fund. At the time of writing, it is not clear if the updated 2019-20 data will be used by UKRI in the SURE Fund calculation.

### Proposed collection arrangements

8. The following table provides details of the proposed data collection arrangements for the remainder of AY 2020-21.

Date	Return
28 October 2020	SURE Fund data request for 2019-20 and 2020-21 non-EU international student fee income (reflecting September 2020 intake and anticipated January 2021 intake). (See <b>Annex A</b> )
30 November 2020	Update on 2019-20 and 2020-21 forecasts (Strategic Plan Forecast format)
28 January 2021	Revised SURE Fund data request for 2019-20 and 2020-21 non-EU international student fee income (reflecting actual January 2021 intake)
16 April 2021	2021 Strategic Plan Forecast covering period to 2022-23.

9. We believe the above arrangements will result in a more meaningful data collection that also minimises the burden for institutions. Please note that it is possible that some of the above dates may be subject to change while additional data returns cannot be ruled out as a result of the continuing evolving picture. The January 2021 collection may not be used for the SURE

Fund as there may be insufficient time to collect and process the data to allow funds to be agreed and disbursed by the end of March 2021. SFC will use the data for monitoring purposes so expects to proceed with the collection. We plan to revert to a regular data collection routine towards the end of 2020-21.

**Information requested**

10. Please email an electronic copy of the return to [isg-returns@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:isg-returns@sfc.ac.uk) by **28 October 2020**.

**Further information**

11. Please contact Andrew Millar, Assistant Director, Finance (Tel: 0131 313 6538; email: [amillar@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:amillar@sfc.ac.uk)) to discuss any aspect of this letter.



**Lorna MacDonald**  
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**Estimated non-EU international student fee income**

	<b>2019-20</b> <b>Draft pre-audit financial data</b> <b>(£'000)</b>	<b>2020-21</b> <b>Forecast data</b> <b>(£'000)</b>
Total non-EU international student fee income* (consistent with HESA Annual Finance Return Table 6, 1fviii)		

\*This data will be shared with UKRI to support the administration of the SURE Fund