



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

SFC Saltire Emerging Researcher Scheme – Call for Proposals

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Issue Date: 8 June 2021

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Deadline: 12 July 2021

Reference: SFC/CI/10/2021

Summary: The Scottish Funding Council is pleased to announce a new SFC Saltire scheme for collaborative European exchanges which will run in Academic Year (AY) 2021-22. We are inviting collaborative consortia based across Scottish universities to submit proposals to administer European exchange programmes of up to six months for doctoral research students and early career researchers under this scheme.

FAO: Principals and VPs (Research) of Scotland’s universities, Directors of research pools

Further information: **Contact:** Charlotte Matheson
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SFC Saltire Emerging Researcher Scheme - Call for Proposals

Introduction

1. The Scottish Funding Council is pleased to announce funding for a number of European exchange programmes for doctoral students and early career researchers. The SFC Saltire Emerging Researcher Scheme is intended to promote mobility between Scotland and European research partners with the aim of strengthening existing, and seeding future, research relationships.
2. The exchanges will take place from January 2022 onwards, with all exchanges completed by the end of August 2022.
3. We are inviting collaborative research consortia based across multiple Scottish universities to submit proposals to run programmes under this scheme by 12 July 2021.
4. In this document we set out the aims, objectives and assessment process for this call.

Background

5. As part of the Scottish budget for 2021-22, Scottish Ministers confirmed the allocation of £6.75 million “to support international and EU activity and collaboration including boosting support for international research collaboration and talent attraction, increase scholarship offering to include EU students and support the effective use of alumni globally.”
6. Of this funding, the Scottish Government has confirmed the award of £2.97 million to SFC and The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) to deliver a portfolio of international research collaboration and mobility schemes to maintain and strengthen Scottish-European research collaboration. £934,000 has been allocated towards the SFC Saltire Emerging Researcher Scheme which is expected to fund c. 70 placements or exchanges for postgraduate research students and early career researchers between Scottish and European universities.

Call for Proposals

7. Collaborative research consortia based across multiple Scottish universities are invited to submit proposals for funding of up to £100,000 each to run exchange programmes of up to six months for doctoral research students and/or early career researchers in AY 2021-22. Each programme is expected to support c. 10 inbound or outbound placements or exchanges between universities in Scotland and EU Member States, EEA and EFTA countries.

8. New and existing Scottish university consortia are eligible to apply, but given the timeframe for submitting proposals we expect most proposals to come from existing research collaborations. Where relevant, consortia may submit proposals to extend existing exchange programmes.
9. Proposals must be submitted by each consortium's nominated host university. Host universities will be required to administer SFC funding on behalf of the partnership and report back on the use of this funding.
10. The deadline for proposals is noon on 12 July 2021. Proposals will be considered by an assessment panel in July 2021 and the announcement of successful consortia will be made in August 2021.

Proposal Criteria

11. Placement/exchange programme proposals are welcomed from research consortia which are based in Scotland and which span a wide range of Scottish universities. To give us confidence of delivery in a tight time frame, we expect the applying consortia will pre-exist, be Scotland-wide in scale and reach, and have a track record of delivering postgraduate training. Proposals:
 - Should be open to PGRs and ECRs currently based within universities in Scotland, EU Member States, EEA and EFTA countries.
 - Should detail the outcomes that will be delivered by the programme in AY 2021-22, including achievable targets and key performance indicators.
 - Should cover the full cost of the exchange, including travel¹, accommodation, and reasonable additional costs arising from Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) considerations.
 - Should explore the potential for match funding from European partners, especially where this will involve a two-way exchange of PGRs/ECAs.
 - May build on, or be extensions to, existing activity or may be new developments.
 - May be based around particular areas of research such as challenge areas, around access to defined areas of expertise or equipment, or target specific institutions or regions.
 - Should consider alternative approaches should physical exchanges not be possible for some or all participants.
 - May include some central resource for administration and for central events/learning for cohorts.

¹ Visa costs for incoming or outgoing exchanges/placements will not be covered.

- Should provide a clear breakdown of projected income and expenditure over the term of the programme.
12. Consortia may, in addition to the above, apply for funding to host an Emerging Researcher cohort-building/networking/learning and development event or series of events for all inbound and outbound participants in the SFC Saltire Emerging Researchers exchange scheme (c.70). One consortium will be given funding of up to £20,000 to hold such an event or series of events.
 13. The Emerging Researcher event(s) may be held virtually or in person, but with a preference that at least one opportunity will be given to participants to attend an event in person if possible. All inbound and outbound participants will be encouraged to attend this event/programme, with the aim of promoting and enhancing stronger collaborations between emerging researchers in Scotland and Europe.
 14. Proposals must follow the proposal structure outlined in Annex A.

Funding

15. Each successful exchange programme will be funded up to a maximum of £100,000 in AY 2021-22, covering costs of up to £10,000 per researcher per exchange.
16. Further justifiable costs may be sought to cover costs associated with administration of the scheme. These should be carefully detailed in the programme proposal.
17. SFC funding will be allocated to and managed by the consortium's nominated host university. Other institutions involved in the project must also be listed in the proposal.

Equality and Diversity

18. SFC considers equality and diversity in all its priorities. SFC asks institutions to be mindful of the Equality Act (2010), including the statutory requirement for Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIsAs) of new and revised strategies and policies. **Proposals must include an EHRIA.** Institutions can complete their own EHRIA form or use SFC's form which is available upon request. Further information and guidance is available from SFC's website.²

Submission

19. Proposals must be able to demonstrate senior level support from the nominated host university. Applications will only be eligible if signed by the

² <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/access-inclusion/access-equality-diversity/access-equality-diversity.aspx>

Principal or delegated signatory.

20. The deadline for proposals is **noon, on Monday 12 July 2021**. Proposals should be submitted to Dr Charlotte Matheson, Policy/Analysis Officer, cmatheson@sfc.ac.uk.

Assessment

21. Eligible proposals will be taken forward for consideration by an assessment panel comprising SFC and its partner organisations. The assessment panel is likely to include representatives from SFC, SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Scottish Government and The Royal Society of Edinburgh.
22. The assessment panel may propose integration of proposals that have significant overlap and where collaboration could substantially increase impact.

Indicative Timetable

Action	Date
Call for proposals launched	8 June 2021
Call for proposals deadline	12 July 2021
Assessment panel	w/c 19 July 2021
Applicant notification*	August 2021
Funding award letters issued	August 2021

*We will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants at a later date. The level of feedback will be dependent on the number of proposals received.

Data Protection

23. Any materials produced, reporting required, promotional information, etc. must be compliant with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. Institutions must ensure any participants are aware of how their information will be processed in accordance with GDPR. For more information about how SFC uses personal data please see our [Privacy Notice](#).
24. SFC reserves the right to share content, reports and other information with the Scottish Government and other relevant stakeholders to promote and evidence the way in which funding has been used.

Further information

25. For further information and informal enquiries please contact Charlotte Matheson, Policy/Analysis Officer, Research and Innovation Directorate, tel: 0131 313 6550, email: cmatheson@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

Proposal Structure

The proposal document must include the following sections in the listed order below. Proposals should use this structure to meet all proposal criteria in paragraphs 11-14. Proposals which do not provide this information will be ineligible.

- Nominated host university and other universities involved in the consortium.
- Brief description of proposed exchange programme (max. 2 pages), including:
 - Key aims and objectives of the programme.
 - Whether the scheme will be open to incoming exchanges, outgoing exchanges or both.
 - Proposed European partner universities, where these are based and whether these are new or existing partners.
 - Whether the programme will be focused on a particular country or set of countries.
 - Whether the programme will be based around a particular area of research.
 - Whether this will be a new exchange programme or build upon/extend an existing programme.
 - Assessment criteria for applicants, including whether the programme is open to PGRs, ECRs or both.
 - When and how exchange opportunities will be advertised.
 - How possibilities for match funding from European partners have or will be explored.
- A brief plan outlining key stages and dates of the programme.
- Brief description of consortium and its suitability for delivering the proposed programme (max. 3 paragraphs).
- Contingency plans detailing how the aims of relationship building and shared learning across Scottish and European institutions will be met if physical travel is not possible for some or all programme participants (max 3 paragraphs).
- Proposed exchange programme summary, suitable for publication (max. 3 paragraphs).
- Detailed programme income (including all sources) and expenditure statement, providing detail of further justified costs that will be sought for administrative and marketing costs.
- Details of any planned cohort building or networking activities. Where a consortium is applying for additional funding of up to £20,000 to deliver an Emerging Researcher cohort building/networking/learning and development event(s) for all participants across the Emerging Researchers Scheme (see paragraph 10), further details should be provided including:

- Structure of event and outline of planned cohort-building/networking/learning and development events/activities.
 - Income and expenditure statement.
 - Timeline and key dates.
- Senior level sign-off from host university or organisation.
- Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (see paragraph 18). This can be provided as a separate annex.