



Scottish Funding Council

Promoting further and higher education

SFC/19/88
Agenda item 8
5 December 2019

Use of delegated authority

Purpose

- To report the Chief Executive's use of delegated authority during the period 13 August 2019 until 14 November 2019.

Recommendation

- Note the use of the Chief Executive's delegated authority from 13 August 2019 until 14 November 2019, under the Council's scheme of delegation.

Use of delegated authority

Purpose

1. This paper asks Council to note the use of the Chief Executive's delegated authority during the period 13 August 2019 until 14 November 2019.

Background

2. The Council's agreed scheme of delegation sets out both the matters for which the Chief Executive has delegated authority and the reporting arrangements for the Chief Executive's application of delegated authority. A copy of the full scheme is available from this webpage:
 - <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/about-sfc/how-we-operate/sfc-governance/governance-sfc.aspx>
3. The Council also delegates authority to the Chief Executive to implement specific financial decisions.

Use of delegated authority

4. The Chief Executive has approved the following actions under delegated authority from the Council, as described in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

SG strategic priorities

5. The full list of Scottish Government (SG) strategic priorities is given in Annex A.

Consents

6. The Chief Executive has agreed borrowing consent for loan funding of £7M for the University of Stirling under the 2019-20 Financial Transactions programme, for the Cottrell Building (Learning and Teaching Spaces) project.

FE/HE Capital funds

7. No FE or HE capital funds were approved under delegated authority during this period.

Joint FE/HE programme funds

Grant Line/project	Effective institutions: JISC
Delegation element	Specific delegated authority from Council Board at its meeting on 25 June 2019.
Amount and purpose	A total of £9,019,213 (including university subscriptions of £945,841) has been awarded as SFC's contribution to the JISC programme for Academic Year (AY) 2019-20. This funding is to provide digital services for institutions under 3 headings: shared services such as the Janet network, sector deals on services and collections of digital resources, and advice and support.
SG strategic priorities	2,7 and 9
Identified risk	Low

FE Programme Funds

Grant Line/project	Effective institutions: National Bargaining – Job Evaluation Process Costs (stage 2)
Delegation element	General delegated authority, on advice of the Strategic Funding Group by correspondence in October 2019.
Amount and purpose	Funding of £872,245 in AY 2019-20 has been awarded to Colleges Scotland to fund the costs of undertaking the national support staff job evaluation exercise. A total of £687,055 has previously been paid by SFC to colleges to co-ordinate the preparation of role questionnaires while £50,000 was also awarded to support the costs of releasing Trade Union representatives (Stage 1 of the process).
SG strategic priorities	2,4
Identified risk	Low

HE programme funds

Grant Line/project	Ring-fenced SG funding: UNICEF Data for Children Hub
Delegation element	General delegated authority to accept and award ring-fenced offers of grant from Government, on advice of the Strategic Funding Group at its meeting on 1 May 2019.
Amount and purpose	£1,500,000 over AYs 2019-20 to 2021-22. Funding is to establish

	a 'UNICEF Data for Children Hub in Scotland' in partnership with UNICEF, The Data Lab and the University of Edinburgh. The Hub will work on some of the most complex challenges affecting children in Scotland and globally. Its purpose is to enable and deliver collaborations between academic, private sector and public sector that use data science to improve outcomes for children across a spectrum of themes.
SG strategic priorities	3,4
Identified risk	Low

Grant Line/project	Effective Institutions: Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
Delegation element	Specific delegated authority from Council Board on 25 June 2019. Scottish Government confirmed that Ministerial approval not necessary because this is not discretionary funding. It provides a statutory function.
Amount and purpose	£1,237,127 in AY 2019-20. SFC contracts with QAA Scotland to provide a range of services to provide assurance about the quality of learning and teaching in universities and to support enhancement. SFC looks to QAA to monitor and evaluate how national enhancement activities align with institutional activities, and to provide critical feedback on all enhancement activities. In AY 2019-20 we will look to QAA to continue to improve dissemination and reporting about the impact of enhancement at institution level, in Scotland and UK wide and to continue to support and extend active student engagement in quality enhancement activities.
SG strategic priorities	2
Identified risk	Low

Grant Line/project	Ring-fenced SG funding: Hydro Nation Scholars
Delegation element	General delegated authority to accept and award ring-fenced offers of grant from Government, on advice of the Strategic Funding Group by correspondence in August 2019.
Amount and purpose	£508,427 in AY 2019-20. The Scottish Government is committed to developing the economic, environmental and social value of Scotland's water resources. In support of its overarching strategy, Scotland: The Hydro Nation, the Scottish Government has established a Hydro Nation Scholars Programme. The Hydro Nation Scholars Programme is an open competition for PhD scholars to undertake approved projects hosted within Scottish Universities and Research Institutes.
SG strategic priorities	3,4
Identified risk	Low

Grant Line/project	Innovation Centres: Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre (SAIC) – Phase 2
Delegation element	Specific delegated authority from Council Board on 25 June 2019, with Ministerial approval received on 28 June 2019.
Amount and purpose	£7,500,000 over AYs 2019-20 to 2022-23. SAIC is one of eight SFC-funded Innovation Centres with a Scotland wide remit to help industry access world leading research from the academic base and to help translate this into economic value in the Scottish economy. Phase 2 activity will be aligned under three strands – Driving Innovation, Sharing Innovation and Nurturing Innovation – with an increased focus on SME engagement.
SG strategic priorities	3,4
Identified risk	Medium

Grant Line/project	Innovation Centres: Stratified Medicine Scotland Innovation Centre (SMS) – Phase 2
Delegation element	Specific delegated authority from Council Board on 5 September 2019, with Ministerial approval received on 28 September 2019.
Amount and purpose	£7,500,000 over AYs 2019-20 to 2023-24. SMS is one of eight SFC-funded Innovation Centres with a Scotland wide remit to help industry access world leading research from the academic base and to help translate this into economic value in the Scottish economy. Phase 2 activity will focus on three priority areas: supporting effective implementation of precision medicine into the NHS; supporting the growth of the Life Sciences Sector; and developing a pipeline of sustainable exemplar projects funded by industry and/or grants.
SG strategic priorities	3,4
Identified risk	Medium

Publication

- This paper will be published on the Council website following the Council meeting.

Recommendation

- The Council is asked to note the use of the Chief Executive’s delegated authority from 13 August 2019 until 14 November 2019 under the Council’s scheme of delegation.

Further information

- Contact: Karen Watt, Chief Executive (tel: 0131 313 6646, email: kwatt@sfc.ac.uk).

List of Scottish Government strategic priorities

1	To provide the best student experience, seamlessly connected for learners of all ages and backgrounds
2	To provide high quality learning in a system where institutions work in partnership and demonstrate the highest standards of governance and financial accountability
3	To support Scotland's global reputation as a Science and Research Nation synonymous with high quality teaching, research, knowledge exchange and innovation
4	To operate as a highly effective public body, providing leadership and working in partnership with others to improve outcomes and support an inclusive and sustainable economy