The Scottish Funding Council’s work in tertiary education makes a real difference to people’s lives through learning, research and innovation. Joining us could be a transformative decision for you too.

We are currently looking for:

POST:  
- Senior Policy Officers
- Policy Officers

DIRECTORATE:  
- Research and Innovation
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WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in joining our team at the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

We are the national funding authority for tertiary education and research. We invest around £2 billion every year, and our funding enables colleges and universities to provide life-changing opportunities for over half a million people.

What drives us is our ambition to create and sustain world leading learning, research, and innovation. So, naturally, we have a clear focus on recruiting the best people and developing them throughout their career.

Our policies and investments spread far beyond campuses, and they have real impact on Scotland’s economy and on wider society: this makes the Scottish Funding Council an inspiring place to work.

This is a really exciting time for us. We have recently published a new strategic plan which focuses our priorities, operations, and capabilities to play an even more central and effective role in Scotland’s future.

We are a friendly, welcoming team and we believe we are at our best when our work is informed by different perspectives. We are always keen to receive applications from talented people from all walks of life, whose skills will help us serve all of Scotland’s communities.

We look forward to hearing from you, and very much look forward to welcoming new members to the team.

Karen Watt
Chief Executive
ABOUT THE VACANCIES

OVERVIEW

We are looking for talented, experienced and enthusiastic people to join our Research and Innovation Directorate as Senior Policy Officers and Policy Officers.

We would love to hear from you, whether you are looking for a permanent move or to join us on a secondment.

We welcome applications from people with disabilities and those from minority ethnic and language communities, as well as those who have skills in Scottish Gaelic or British Sign Language.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION DIRECTORATE

We have roles in both our Research team (Policy Officer) and in our Knowledge Exchange & Innovation team (Senior Policy Officers and Policy Officer).

The research team leads SFC’s work to support world-class research in Scottish universities, ensuring Scotland remains globally competitive and attractive to the wide range of people involved in research careers. We aim to develop and sustain a dynamic and internationally competitive research sector that makes a major contribution to economic prosperity, national wellbeing and the expansion of knowledge. Our work includes supporting SFC’s core research grants, designing and implementing evidence-based policy - for example to harness Scottish sector research collaboration, and working as part of the wider research landscape, liaising with the Scottish and UK Government, UK Funding Bodies, our institutions and other key stakeholders.

Scotland’s universities and colleges are a key part of the knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) system because of the skills that their graduates bring to the economy, the quality of their research and their ability to generate new ideas, products and processes: all of which has the potential to support business growth and competitiveness.

SFC aims to enable Scotland’s colleges and universities (our institutions) to be effective agents of knowledge exchange, innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship. This is a very exciting time for KE&I in Scotland as we seek to implement the recommendations from our recent Review. The KE&I team is leading on the development of our underpinning support for university and college KE&I capacity, the relaunching of our Innovation Centre programme as stable long term infrastructure (as well as Interface) and our plans for the delivery of an Entrepreneurial Campus Strategy.
SENIOR POLICY OFFICER ROLE

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting to the Assistant Director, and working as part of a small team, these are the types of responsibilities you can expect to take on as Senior Policy Officer in the Research & Innovation Directorate:

1. Lead and/or support (variously) the development of key areas of SFC’s strategy and delivery - including, but not limited to, implementation of the recommendations within SFC’s Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability.

2. Take responsibility for engagement with key partners, ensuring SFC’s policy positions are clearly understood and that there is effective and proactive stakeholder management.

3. Horizon-scan and provide advice, support and guidance to internal and external Scottish stakeholders, producing briefings, reports and committee papers as required for SFC senior management and key stakeholders.

4. Develop and programme manage strategic investments as required.

5. Provide advice and guidance to institutions and stakeholders (both internal and external) as required.

6. Draft and present policy and strategy papers at committee and board level.

7. Draft high-level briefings, speeches and other materials for senior SFC staff and board members.

8. Represent SFC at external meetings, conferences and other events, including giving presentations, chairing and facilitating discussions when required.

9. Provide effective line management to other team members as required.

10. Contribute flexibly to the work of the wider directorate and other groups in SFC as appropriate and when required. From time to time this may include deputising for your line manager or other colleagues.

This list is not exhaustive: in this role you may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with your grade or that may reasonably be required of you.
PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL

• Experience of leading on, or having direct input to, analysis-based policy development, stakeholder engagement and influencing within a complex political environment.

• A proven track record of delivering high quality and effective outputs within time and resource constraints.

• Well-developed analytical skills, including the ability to use both qualitative and quantitative data to good effect.

• Excellent interpersonal and communication skills so as to represent, negotiate and persuade, with the ability to build and maintain strong relationships with a diverse range of people, including those at a senior level, and to enhance SFC’s reputation.

• Ability to manage and develop people.

• Effective oral and written communication skills.

• A proven ability to analyse, understand and respond to complex issues in an appropriate manner, demonstrating good judgement.

• Effective organisation and project management skills to cope with a diverse and changing workload.

• Ability to interpret, analyse and explain complex information to audiences with varying degrees of expertise.

• Ability to work collectively and with impact as part of a team.

• Degree level education (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 9) or equivalent experience.

DESIRABLE

• Evidence of subject matter experience relevant to the role(s).

• Experience of monitoring and evaluating projects/programmes.

• A proven track record of leading and managing people.

• Knowledge of the further and/or higher education sector.

• A demonstrable understanding of the current Scottish political and Government operating environment.
POLICY OFFICER ROLE

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting to a Senior Policy Officer, and working as part of a small team, these are the types of responsibilities you can expect to take on as Policy Officer in the Research & Innovation Directorate:

1. Working closely with the Senior Policy Officer, assist in developing policy for SFC’s support for research and innovation in Scottish HEIs.
2. Support work in developing evidence on the performance of the Scottish research and innovation base and make recommendations on what SFC’s strategic and policy responses should be.
3. Assist in the development and implementation of a suite of strategic programmes, in partnership with key stakeholders, to deliver the Council’s vision for Scottish research and innovation.
4. Provide advice and guidance to internal and external stakeholders as necessary.
5. Assist in drafting Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and Council papers, circulars, consultation papers, reports and letters on research policies.
6. Clerking duties, as required.

The above list is not exhaustive, and you may be required to undertake other duties commensurate with your grade or that may reasonably be required of you.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL

- Policy development or implementation experience.
- Experience of liaising/working with external stakeholders or the higher education sector.
- Good interpersonal skills in order to build, develop and maintain working relationships with internal and external stakeholders, as well as to work flexibly with colleagues in other parts of the organisation.
- Effective oral and written communications skills, including the capacity to analyse, understand and respond to complex issues in an appropriate manner.
- Strong organisational (including effective personal management) and project management abilities.

DESIRABLE

- Some knowledge of monitoring and evaluating projects.
- Understanding of research and innovation policy in the Scottish and UK context and of the main policy issues in higher education.
- Some knowledge of research and innovation strategy/policy development and implementation at a national level.
- A good awareness of higher and further education issues in Scotland.
- A good awareness of Scottish, UK, and European research and innovation issues.
- A good understanding of the current Scottish political and Government environment.
- Qualified to SCQF Level 9 (Degree) or equivalent experience.
KEY REWARDS AND BENEFITS

The salary ranges for these posts are:

Senior Policy Officer (Grade E3): £40,086 - £46,662 per annum (1.0 FTE).
Policy Officer (Grade E2): £32,883 - £38,724 per annum (1.0 FTE).

- Normal full-time hours of work are 36 per week. We will consider flexible working arrangements. A flexi-time system is in operation.

- Annual leave entitlement of 26.5 days pro-rata, rising to 30 days pro-rata after 4 years’ continuous service. Public and privilege holiday entitlement of 11.5 days pro-rata.

- A flexible approach to hybrid working, giving you flexibility to work from home for some of the time while also maintaining regular in-person contact with colleagues.

- Annual pay review: approved within the framework of the Scottish Government’s Public Sector Pay Policy and negotiated with our recognised trade union, Unite.

- Eligibility to join the Civil Service Pension Scheme. With its low member contribution rates and generous employer contributions, this gives you a secure, inflation-proof pension for life with no investment uncertainty. Details of contribution rates together with further details of the pension benefits are available on the Civil Service Pensions website. There is also the option of a Partnership pension account.

- Support for continuous professional development.

- Support for health and wellbeing, including generous occupational sick pay, free access to confidential advice and support through our 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme, Special Leave (paid and unpaid), a contribution to learning outside work through our Lifelong Learning Fund, free winter flu vaccination, and access to occupational health support.

- Support for travel to and from work, including a salary sacrifice cycle loan scheme, cycle storage and shower facilities, an interest-free loan for bus or rail season tickets and free office car parking for employees on a first-come basis.
HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please send your CV and covering letter to recruitment@sfc.ac.uk. The selection panel will use this evidence to assess your application against the selection criteria in the Person Specification section above. In your CV please also set out your educational and professional qualifications, and career history, with key responsibilities, dates and achievements. Please provide reasons for any gaps.

Please state which level of post you are applying for and (for the Policy Officer roles) whether you have a preference for the Research team or the Knowledge Exchange & Innovation team.

Please also provide the following:

- Your current salary.
- Any dates when you will not be able to attend the interview.
- When you could take up appointment if successful.
- Details of two referees. One must be your present or most recent employer. We will take up references for the successful candidate at the offer stage.
- A completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. It is not essential to provide this, but this data is valuable in supporting our equality and diversity aims. We will treat your diversity data in the strictest confidence. It is not provided to the selection panel and will not affect your application in any way. For each of the questions on the form you have the option to select ‘prefer not to say’.

If relevant, you should also tell us if you wish to claim a guaranteed interview under the Disability Confident Scheme. Under this Scheme, all applicants who consider themselves to be disabled in terms of the Equality Act 2010, and who meet the essential minimum criteria for the post will be guaranteed an interview. You can find further guidance on the definition of disability for these purposes on the DirectGov website here: Disability and the Equality Act 2010.

If you give any information which you know is false, or if you withhold relevant information, this may lead to your application being rejected, or if you have already been appointed, to your dismissal.

Please email your application to recruitment@sfc.ac.uk by 9am on 13 December 2022. You should receive an automated acknowledgement. If you have any queries on the application process, please phone us on 0131 313 6500 and ask for Human Resources.
If you have not heard from us within 21 days of the closing date your application has been unsuccessful.

RESERVE LISTS

Please note that if we have more appointable candidates than vacancies available a Reserve List may be used for up to 12 months to fill the same role or other similar roles with closely matching essential criteria without further testing of merit via an interview process.

YOUR PRIVACY

To read more about how we collect, store and share your data please read our privacy notice which can be accessed on our website here: Privacy Notice (sfc.ac.uk).
THE SELECTION PROCESS

SHORTLISTING

The selection panel will assess your application by considering the evidence you have provided in your CV and supporting statement. Please ensure your application demonstrates how you meet the criteria in the Person Specification for the role. The selection panel will then select the shortlist of candidates to take forward to interview stage.

INTERVIEWS

If you are shortlisted we will invite you to attend a panel interview in which you will be invited to discuss your interest in the post and to give evidence of your experience and professional competence in relation to the Key Responsibilities and the criteria in the Person Specification. You may find it helpful to use the STARR model to prepare for this.

We may also invite you to prepare an exercise and/or give a brief presentation to the panel as part of the selection process.

INDICATIVE TIMELINE

This timeline below indicates the date by which decisions are expected to be made. We will aim to advise all candidates of the outcome as soon as possible at each stage.

Please note that these dates are indicative and may be subject to change. If you are unable to meet these dates please tell us in your supporting statement.

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<td>Shortlist agreed</td>
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<td>Interviews</td>
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You can learn more about the work SFC does and about other job opportunities at www.sfc.ac.uk. You can also set up an e-mail alert to be advised of any other vacancies that might interest you.