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: Deputy Director, Governance and Planning
DIRECTORATE: Chief Executive’s Office
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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 vacancy

Overview

We are looking for an experienced and enthusiastic person to join our organisation as **Deputy Director, Governance and Planning**.

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

We would love to hear from you and 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.

Background and Purpose of Role

This new role has been established to provide leadership in SFC’s governance, change management, planning, performance management, reporting and legal compliance, to ensure that the right decisions are made at the right time, and to support the development of SFC as an excellent organisation.

As an organisation SFC is a fantastic place to work, with a clear statutory remit, a national platform and a dedicated, expert and motivated workforce. We are also an organisation that is changing. Following a national Review of our mission, we are refocusing our priorities, operations and capabilities to add even more value and make a greater difference for Scotland.

We are a non-departmental public body, with our own Board and directly accountable to Scottish Government Ministers and the Scottish Parliament. This post has a fundamental role to play in helping us achieve our objective of being an excellent public body that delivers impact.

In this post you will oversee the delivery of a transformation programme and will have specific responsibility for supporting: - good governance; leading and developing our planning, performance management, reporting activity and focus right across the organisation; strategic compliance with the requirements of government and oversight frameworks; and bringing co-ordinated and structured leadership to our pursuit of excellence as an outstanding non-departmental public body as well as our programmes driving change and improvement to fulfil our ambitions and purpose.
Key Responsibilities

1. To be the Secretary to the SFC Board and to lead good governance and management within SFC, including with the Senior Leadership Group. This means shaping agendas; brokering key relationships; safeguarding the reputation of SFC as an excellent and well-governed organisation; and securing good quality, succinct and evidence-based information, analysis and advice to underpin sound decision-making while supporting the Board and senior executives in their understanding of the context for strategy formation and for key decisions. This includes bringing coherence to committee planning and the quality of secretariat functions generally as well as liaising with the Deputy Director of External Affairs on a programme of Board engagement.

2. To provide assurance to the Board and Senior Leadership Group that we comply with our standing orders and procedural guidance, statutory and regulatory responsibilities, manage conflicts of interest appropriately, uphold the standards of behaviour in public life and strive for excellence and good practice as a public body. This includes leading our FOI, information governance and records management (including the records management plan and SharePoint policies), data protection and complaint-handling functions; and providing advice and support for our Senior Information Risk Owner.

3. To bring vital co-ordination and structure to programmes of change across SFC, establishing and running appropriate programme and governance structures, working with our Communications team who will be enhancing SFC’s internal communications capacity, and enabling the executive team to fulfil our renewed purpose and ambition. This is a broad mandate to work with senior leaders and SFC colleagues to drive lasting systemic improvements within SFC. This will also involve embedding a culture of project and programme management across the organisation.

4. To lead and develop the organisation’s corporate planning, performance management, and risk management functions so that we meet our short-term and longer-term objectives; and help to create enduring policies that strengthen our operational efficiency and efficacy. This includes managing the development and implementation of the Strategic and Operating Plans, and supporting the development of good planning, performance metrics, delivery monitoring and reporting processes across the organisation. This will include leading on the co-ordination and integration of activity, financial and workforce planning, recognising that Finance and People Directorates will be key allies in bringing coherence to this work; that policy and planning should connect; and that the post-holder will help bring alignment to our corporate and directorate planning, measures and reporting. The post-holder will assess whether the pursuit of a structured quality framework, such as the EFQM model, might help embed best practice.

5. To lead the development of a range of appropriate management information and reporting to stakeholders including the Board, committees and senior teams, to enable us to collectively oversee the organisation and support continuous improvement; and,
working with our External Affairs and Finance teams, to provide performance information that can be shared with external stakeholders such as the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament, to ensure we are accountable. This includes the co-ordination of the requirements associated with publications relating to external audit and the report that is laid before the Scottish Parliament. This involves close liaison with the Finance team, who lead the relationship with our external auditors and SFC’s Audit Committee and who set the timescales to ensure the publication is delivered to required timescales and quality.

6. To form part of a cohesive, collaborative senior management team that collectively leads and directs the delivery of outcomes, oversees a programme of change and development for the organisation and its people, fosters a positive culture, and enables us to meet our purpose and mission.

7. To fulfil an ambassadorial and influencing role for SFC, representing SFC in various NDPB and agency governance and planning forums; and deputising for the Chief Executive in a range of engagements with senior external stakeholders, government and across SFC functions.

This is indicative and the exact nature of these duties will vary with time and from post to post. Post holders are expected to carry out any work that is commensurate with their grade or that may reasonably be required of them.

Person Specification

Qualifications and Experience

• A track-record of successful experience as a leader in a setting that enables you to demonstrate a respect for, and a deep understanding and practical working of protocols and compliance requirements, ideally within a body affected by government policy.

• Significant previous responsibility for good governance, strategic planning, performance management, and the oversight of change programmes.

• Demonstrable commitment to promoting an inclusive culture that provides opportunities for all.

• Ability to adapt and flex to work constructively with a wide range of people and perspectives and be an effective senior team player.

• Educated to degree level, ideally with a relevant professional qualification.
Skills and Attributes

- **Leadership** – an inclusive and forward-looking leadership style that values collaboration and yet is comfortable supporting decisions that affect the whole organisation, including on complex, sensitive and reputational matters; the ability to bring constructive challenge to existing systems and processes, to secure improvements and motivate colleagues at a time of change; the ability to demonstrate integrity, transparency and values-based leadership that promotes equality and diversity, and the ability to lead through influence and persuasion. You will be a passionate and energetic advocate for SFC and its mission in every quarter.

- **Relationship Management** – effective in building relationships that generate confidence, respect and collaborative working at all levels, but in particular at senior levels within the Board, senior executives with SFC and with the Scottish Government. This requires a significant level of political acumen, alongside excellent communication and engagement skills.

- **Securing Results** – the ability to translate broad strategic ambitions into clear objectives and outcomes, work with others to create the right culture for improving operational effectiveness, systems and processes, and compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

- **Strategy** – successful experience of working at a senior level, developing operational planning ahead and contributing to the overall strategic development of the organisation; advising, supporting and setting direction in a complex policy and funding environment, taking account of SFC’s and the government’s priorities and anticipating shifts in priorities over time. You should understand relevant policy and strategy in Scotland and the wider UK context, including the Scottish Government’s key objectives for colleges and universities and the pursuit of social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

- **Evidence driven** – the ability to analyse complex data, both quantitative and qualitative, to support operational policy making and implementation and develop management information that will inform decision-making.

- **Teamwork** – contributing positively in collegiate settings and creating a culture of high performance, diversity and inclusion, and effective people management, developing skills, capacity and capability within your team, across the wider organisation and with partner agencies.

- **Personal Resilience** - the determination, stamina and self-awareness needed to look after yourself and those you lead, enabling you and your team to sustain effectiveness at a senior level in a political and multiply complex environment, with integrity and impartiality.
Key rewards and benefits

The salary range for this post (Grade M2) is **£65,478 to £77,214** 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 and (where relevant) professional body membership.

- 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

Please send your CV and covering letter to recruitment@sfc.ac.uk by 9am on Monday 9 January 2023. 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 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 Monday 9 January 2023. 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 please conclude that 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 criteria in the Person Specification. You may find it helpful to use the STAR method 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 advise all candidates of the outcome as soon as possible at each stage.

Please note that some of these dates are indicative and may be subject to change. If you are unable to meet the stated interview date, please tell us in your supporting statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key stage</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closing date for applications</td>
<td>9am on Monday 9 January 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortlist agreed</td>
<td>Thursday 12 January 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews (most likely date)</td>
<td>Friday 20 January 2023</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.