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Scottish Funding Council
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Dear Francesca

The Scottish Government writes annually to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) regarding intake numbers for medical schools in Scotland. This follows careful consideration by the Scottish Government of the relevant factors including the advice of the Medical Undergraduate Group .

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that there is a sufficient supply of medical students coming through the system to ensure a sustainable supply for the future. Following discussion and agreement at the Medical Undergraduate Group in May 2025, and with approval from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, the intake target for AY 2026/27 will remain at 1,417.

Ministers remain committed to growing the number of Scottish domiciled medical students studying at Scottish universities as a policy priority. Universities should note that the Scottish Government wishes the SFC to continue to monitor the number of Scottish domiciled students studying medicine in Scotland, including as a proportion of the overall medical school's intake.

Given the continued over recruitment of international students, the Scottish Government has considered how this should be managed and the following decisions have been made that will impact Scottish Medical Schools for AY 2026/27:

- A 10% cap on the overall student intake target will replace the previous target of 78 international students per year. This is calculated as 10% of each Medical School's individual intake target, not in addition to the target.
- The 10% cap will apply to all international students entering year 1 of the medical programme.
- This 10% cap, based on current intake targets will result in a higher number of international students compared to previous targets. Medical Schools should note that the Scottish Government does not wish to see a decrease in Scottish domiciled students.

- Additionally, the 10% cap will apply to a medical school's overall student intake target, even if they have specific programmes that do not allow international students as part of their offering.
- Over-recruitment will be limited to 3% on the number of international students per medical school. If the 3% cap results in less than a whole number, this should be rounded up to the next whole number. We will work with colleagues in the Scottish Funding Council to explore options for recovery of funding, where universities breach the 3% tolerance for international students. We would anticipate being able to confirm the proposed process by the end of 2026, for implementation from AY 2027/28.

The Scottish Government is aware that a large number of offers have already been made for AY 2026/27. We recognise that these offers must be honoured and acknowledge that the cap on international students may be exceeded for this year, but that from AY 2027/28 controls will be in place.

For awareness, from AY 2027/28, the following decision has been made:

- The Medical ACT levy (sometimes referred to as the Overseas levy) will be increased to up to the full amount of £21,000 per year, for all international medical students.

Further decisions have been made that will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders for future years intakes:

- Overseas transfer students who primarily join Scottish Medical Schools in year three of study should not be recruited in numbers that exceed students lost by attrition in the first two years of each cohort. Onward monitoring and data governance is to be set up therefore will not apply to AY 2026/27.
- The Scottish Government will explore an exemptions process allowing Medical Schools to request additional international students on a year to year basis.

The breakdown of international places based on the 10% cap is detailed in the table below:

AY 2026-27 international student cap	
University of Aberdeen	30
University of Dundee	22
University of Edinburgh	33
University of Glasgow	35
University of St. Andrews	23
Total	143

The Scottish Government recommends that the medical undergraduate intake for AY 2026/27 should be as follows:

- Scots/rUK/RoI/Gibraltar – 1,274 (Scottish domiciled numbers must not decrease)
- International – 143
- **Overall Intake – 1,417**

Should medical schools foresee any difficulties in meeting the targets for AY 2026/27 beyond the stated tolerance levels then they should make this known at the earliest opportunity.



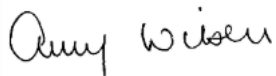
In the 2021 PfG the Scottish Government committed to doubling the number of widening access (WA) places from 60 to 120. As of the 2023-24 there was 110 WA places. Given the increases in previous years, for 2024-25, the Scottish Government will maintain this target at 110 places in 2026/27, the distribution of places also remains the same. This is detailed in the table below.

AY 2026-27 total widening access intake	
University of Aberdeen	24
University of Dundee	24
University of Edinburgh	25
University of Glasgow	25
University of St. Andrews	12
Total	110

In order to meet this criteria, students should be from a SIMD 20 and/or from a care experience background. The intake on the pre-medical entry courses at Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities will remain unchanged for 2026/27.

I would be grateful if the Scottish Funding Council would now make the necessary arrangements for the 2026/27 intake.

Yours sincerely



Amy Wilson
Deputy Director, Workforce Planning and Development