



Scottish Funding Council  
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

**Additional University Upskilling  
Funding for Micro-credentials  
in AY 2021-22**

**SFC Announcement**

Issue Date: 9 November 2021

## Additional university Upskilling funding for Micro-credentials in AY 2021-22

Issue date: 9 November 2021

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Summary: Announcement of additional upskilling funding for micro-credentials in Academic Year (AY) 2021-22 for universities through the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF).

FAO: Principals and Finance Directors of Scotland's universities.

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## Additional university upskilling funding for micro-credentials in AY 2021-22

### Summary

1. I am writing to announce £2 million of additional upskilling funding for micro-credentials in Academic Year (AY) 2021-22 for universities under the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF).

### Background

2. *Protecting Scotland, Renewing Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2020-2021* sets clear priorities for dealing with the economic, health, and social crisis created by coronavirus. Central to economic recovery is a new national mission to help create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs and to work with employers and individuals to build the skills and infrastructure that will be required in the industries of the future.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions are continuing to have an unprecedented impact on our society, economy and labour market and we continue to operate within an uncertain context. In addition to this unprecedented shift in skills needs, the impact of our exit from the European Union (EU) is starting to become more evident in skills planning as new gaps emerge. Finally the move towards 'Net Zero' will introduce further necessary changes in the skills profile of the workforce which will require investment. The NTTF micro-credential funding has a key role in providing skills interventions that can be flexed to address the very significant employability and skills needs we know employers and employees will have over the coming period.

### Policy drivers

4. The context and policy drivers for SFC's Upskilling Fund are set out in our published [guidance](#). The key policy drivers for the Scottish Government's NTTF are:
  - Supporting employer workforce development in line with the aims of the Scottish Government's [Labour Market Strategy](#), [Disability Employment Action Plan](#), [Race Equality Action Plan](#), [Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#) (particularly in the areas of upskilling/reskilling Scotland's existing workforce) and the [Fair Work Action Plan](#) and consistent with the ambitions to raise productivity.
  - Supporting employees to upskill and reskill in a rapidly changing labour market.

- **Transitioning through the pandemic** – helping sectors that are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and those that will see growth to adapt to the new labour market conditions facing them.
- The **future skills transition including transition to net zero** – providing opportunities for upskilling and reskilling to support the development of green skills in support of the ambitions in our Climate Change Plan and our Just Transition and Digital Strategy.
- **Transitioning out of the EU** – helping sectors that are experiencing skills gaps or shortages as a result of EU Exit to access talent and ensuring growth sectors are supported.

### **National Transition Training Fund**

5. In AY 2021-22 the £30 million National Transition Training Fund (NTTF) aims to tackle the rise in unemployment in adults aged 25+ by offering short sharp training opportunities for people to learn in-demand skills. It will provide adults with tailored support to identify relevant training and employment opportunities, followed by funded training to match each individual's needs. This will be made up of a range of smaller initiatives working in the areas of the economy where there is the greatest need for additional skilled staff.

### ***Eligibility criteria***

6. Eligibility criteria for AY 2021-22 has been broadened to include the following characteristics. Learners must be 25+ years old and either:
  - Unemployed, at risk of redundancy or their job under threat as a result of COVID-19 or the economic impact of EU Exit;
  - Have identified a skills gap in their current job or to return to employment;  
or
  - Have identified a skills gap as part of the [‘Just Transition’ to net zero](#).

### **Additional upskilling funding**

7. The purpose and expected use of SFC's Upskilling Fund is set out in our published [guidance](#), along with course/provision and student/learner eligibility parameters which are unchanged from AY 2020-21 and apply to this additional funding.
8. All additional upskilling funding must be for micro-credential activity and cannot be used for any curriculum/course development.

### ***Additional funding allocations for AY 2021-22***

9. Additional upskilling funding for micro-credentials, totalling £2 million, has been allocated in proportion to universities' AY 2021-22 Upskilling Fund allocations.
10. This is shown in **Annex A** which provides a breakdown, by institution, of the distribution of additional upskilling funding for micro-credentials in AY 2021-22.

### ***Payment of funds***

11. SFC will make payment of funding to universities in line with our standard profile of monthly payments for main grants in AY 2021-22 (the same payment profile as the main Upskilling Fund), we expect provision to be delivered within AY 2021-22 and must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

### ***Monitoring and reporting***

12. Monitoring the use of funds and SFC reporting requirements are unchanged from SFC's published Upskilling Fund [guidance](#) for AY 2021-22.
13. In addition to SFC's monitoring requirements, institutions must provide data returns requested by SFC to the following deadlines - 1 February 2022, 1 July 2022 and 1 December 2022 - and standards specified. Further information will follow.

### ***Conditions of grant***

14. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated; that is, for the provision of additional upskilling activity in micro-credentials. SFC retains the right to audit relevant institutional documentation to satisfy itself that this is the case (and the institution undertakes that it will provide such assistance as SFC reasonably requires).
15. Universities are required to report on their use of additional funding for micro-credentials as part of their final upskilling funding report for AY 2021-22 due at the end of August 2022.
16. All media releases must mention projects have been funded by the Scottish Government and SFC; this must be included in the body of the release, not in the notes to editors. Final releases should be shared with SFC for wider ongoing circulation. In addition, in acknowledgement of SFC's funding contribution, SFC and Scottish Government's logos must be displayed on any publicity material relating to this activity (signage, posters, website, etc.). If you have any queries in this regard, please contact SFC's Communications team to discuss, email: [communications@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:communications@sfc.ac.uk). Full details of the NTTF joint communications plan will follow.

## Further information

17. If you have any general queries or require any further information, please contact the SFC Upskilling Mailbox ([upskilling@sfc.ac.uk](mailto:upskilling@sfc.ac.uk)) in the first instance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dunphy'.

**James Dunphy**

Director, Access, Learning & Outcomes