

I am writing to provide input to SFC's Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education: Call for Evidence.

In particular, my response relates to the following two areas:

- *Economic recovery and the skills system. Colleges and universities will be central to the economic recovery, and skills and labour market interventions. We expect colleges and universities to have strong industry and business connections to provide flexible, responsive and applied learning and skills; to consider how best to equip students for employment, further study and fulfilling lives; and to balance basic research with applied research, innovation and knowledge made useful – to fight Covid-19 and to support Scotland's social and economic recovery. We will explore the sectors' contribution to different forms of work-based learning. The issue lies in the balance of all things and the role of individual institutions within these broad system objectives.*
- *Anchor institutions and place. Colleges and universities play an important role in bringing together people, activities, assets, skills, resources and investment for a greater sense of identity and purpose in particular locations and local communities. They are also key to developing local ecosystems that diffuse innovation, and maximise local impacts and productivity gains.*

As an inward investment company to Scotland, BioClavis' decision to locate in Scotland was based on a number of factors, and the strength of the Scottish Higher Education sector was a major factor.

BioClavis has benefited from the close 'Triple Helix' partnership with the University of Glasgow and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, and their welcoming and proactive approach to industry collaboration greatly influenced our decision to locate at the University of Glasgow's Clinical Innovation Zone at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. This location has also provided access to a high quality graduate skills base, and BioClavis' growth trajectory will continue to provide opportunities for local job creation. BioClavis is now a key consortium partner in the £38m University of Glasgow-led Strength in Places Fund award – which will create a Living Laboratory for precision medicine in Glasgow, bringing health benefits, NHS savings, driving innovation and significant job creation.

The University of Glasgow (at all levels of professors and administrators alike) has shown its openness and keenness to collaborate with colleagues in the sector and with Government, funding/enterprise bodies and industry to ensure we use the pandemic as an accelerator for change and so that Scotland's HE sector can reach its full potential in both research and learning and teaching. BioClavis's partnership with the University of Glasgow has now led to us becoming an integral partner of the Lighthouse Laboratory in Glasgow, a key Covid-19 Testing Centre in Scotland. BioClavis has brought leadership and high throughput laboratory skills, enabling the Lighthouse Lab to grow to a forecast 50,000 daily capacity – greatly benefiting the Scottish population (and employing hundreds of skilled workers).

There is an excellent opportunity for SFC to work with the Government as facilitators of collaboration between academia and industry based on shared common goals and strengths. To be most successful, I believe SFC and enterprise bodies should work more closely with universities on planning and collaboration. SFC and Skills Development Scotland already collaborate on skills provision but a closer working and joint planning on a regional approach will surely enhance regional collaboration. Further, I think it is clear that research funding should be focused on areas and which can foster clusters of excellence and leverage maximum economic impact for Scotland, e.g. precision medicine.

A highly-skilled workforce requires an environment with a critical mass of innovative, outward-looking and productive companies that facilitates appropriate job matching and can utilise the benefits of research-intensive universities. Scotland already has a number of areas of strength distributed across its major cities, which should be further supported and developed in an attempt to establish an internationally-renowned reputation within these sectors.