

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, Canon Medical's 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.*

Canon Medical has benefited from the strength of Scotland's Higher Education Sector. We are actively engaged in the 'Triple Helix' partnership with the University of Glasgow and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, and their welcoming and proactive approach to industry collaboration led to our decision to expand and take office space at the University of Glasgow's Clinical Innovation Zone at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. We started working with the University of Glasgow some time ago, because of their reputation in Precision Medicine and we see this location as a unique site for SMEs wanting to work in this area of R&D, and as an exemplar of the University of Glasgow's drive to enable and accelerate the translation of research into patient benefit, NHS savings and economic growth.

Canon successfully partnered with the University of Glasgow last year to win funding from the UK Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund regarding the research and development of new Artificial Intelligence-based diagnostics with the iCAIRD project (the Industrial Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research in Digital Diagnostics) and we continue to develop our partnership and gain additional access to new innovation that we can take to the global healthcare market through our parent company and its global network of sales and marketing professionals.

Canon is also a key consortium partner in the recent £38m University of Glasgow-led Strength in Places Fund award. We see the creation of a Living Laboratory for Precision Medicine as an exciting and unique opportunity for various industry partners to collaborate together and with academics and clinicians to take forward early stage technology and innovation to a larger population. Much is said about the future of Precision Medicine, but industry is not able to invest substantially in the necessary R&D without some level of certainty that the new technology developed will be acceptable to clinicians and will ultimately be procured by healthcare providers. The Living Laboratory is a genuinely visionary project that will provide the catalyst for global companies like Canon to increase their R&D investment in the UK, because of the opportunity for future large-scale

adoption. The Living Laboratory will bring health benefits, NHS savings, drive innovation and significant job creation – all of which has been catalysed by the University of Glasgow being supported as part of Scotland's Higher Education sector.

The University of Glasgow has also shown its openness and keenness to collaborate with colleagues in industry, with Government, funding/enterprise bodies and others in the HE and FE sector to ensure we use the pandemic as an accelerator for change and so that Scotland's HE sector can reach its full potential in research, innovation and learning and teaching.

There is an opportunity for SFC to work with the Scottish Government as facilitators of collaboration between academia and industry based on shared common goals and strengths. 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 will need closer working and joint planning on a regional approach to enhance regional collaboration.

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 and diagnostics. Support from SFC should be directed in such a way as to minimise internal competition within Scotland across the different academic organisations present. The current pseudo competitive environment is confusing to external parties, time consuming to navigate and costly to fund. A more cohesive and directed funding landscape focused on academic organisations of scale and place operating in a 'hub and spoke' manner with other organisations would simplify the engagement process for industry and maximise collaborative opportunities.

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 to establish an international reputation within these sectors.