



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

Funding for counsellors 2020-21

SFC Announcement

Issue Date: 22 September 2020

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Reference: SFC/AN/16/2020

Summary: Announcement of additional funding in AY 2020-21 for counsellors in colleges and universities.

FAO: Principals/Directors, Finance Directors, Chairs and Board Secretaries of Scotland's colleges and universities.

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Funding for counsellors

Summary

1. I am writing to announce the allocation of funding in Academic Year (AY) 2020-21 to provide additional counsellors in colleges and universities. This funding has been provided by the Scottish Government.

Purpose of funding

2. In the 2018 Programme for Government the Scottish Government committed to “providing more than 80 additional counsellors in Further and Higher Education over the next four years”, with an investment of around £20 million. SFC announced the first year of this funding in November 2019¹. The purpose and principles behind this commitment have not changed since the original announcement.
3. SFC recognises that the current COVID-19 emergency will impact institutions’ ability to directly recruit individual counsellors. Institutions should note that the funding and guidance principles allow for flexibility in the procurement of counselling services, as evidenced in the principles below:
 - The funding should enable institutions to put in place counsellors that are dedicated to students and, although these counsellors could be employed by the institution, it is not a requirement of the funding (if alternative arrangements ensure the equivalent additional counselling provision).
 - The funding should cover full-time, part-time and virtual access to counsellors.
4. Therefore, institutions are able to use this funding to build capacity within their counselling services outwith the direct recruitment of individual counsellors. Examples include (but are not limited to):
 - Contracting with an external agency for dedicated counselling support.
 - Securing access to online or virtual counselling services, provided that they meet the conditions of funding e.g. Togetherall Live Therapy. This funding cannot be used to secure access to online platforms which do not provide access to counsellors, such as SilverCloud and the Togetherall Support Wall, although institutions may wish to use these to supplement their counselling services.
 - Shared access to counsellors across institutions within a region.

¹ [Funding for counsellors 2019-20](#)

- Building upon existing provision, e.g. by increasing the amount of counselling hours offered to at least the equivalent of 1 FTE or utilising the capabilities of newly qualified and registered counsellors.
5. The purpose of this funding is to increase the number of counsellors and enhance counselling provision within the sectors. However, there is flexibility for innovative and creative approaches not listed above that may assist in the delivery of counsellors. If you wish to discuss any proposed approach further, please contact Emma Roberts in the first instance by e-mail: eroberts@sfc.ac.uk or tel: 0131 313 6570.
 6. We recognise that institutions may not have been able to implement the full extent of the planned recruitment detailed in their outline plans submitted in November 2019, or that they may wish to change their approach in light of the current situation. Institutions should note that these plans are flexible, and they are able to amend their approach as long as it meets the conditions of funding.
 7. Colleges and universities can continue to utilise any unspent funding from AY 2019-20 for the provision of counselling services. Any adjustments to future funding allocations (to reflect any unspent funds) will be made from AY 2021-22. Incorporated colleges should continue to only drawdown funds as required, and we will similarly consider adjustments for the college sector in AY 2021-22.
 8. At this time, our aim is to continue to support the additional counselling provision that has been put in place, and to allow institutions to continue building the capacity of their counselling services in a flexible and appropriate way. However, we maintain our commitment to supporting equity of access to counselling support across colleges and universities, and this work will be taken forward as a matter of priority as soon as circumstances allow.
 9. The total funding to be received by the college and university sectors in AY 2020-21 is £3.645 million.

Funding allocations for AY 2020-21

10. Funding for counsellors has been allocated to colleges and universities on the same basis as AY 2019-20.
11. These allocations were based on a range of factors including student numbers, mental health and wellbeing indicators, and geography. The funding methodology can be found in [Annex A of the AY 2019-20 funding announcement](#).
12. A breakdown of funding for individual colleges and universities for AY 2020-21 (unchanged from AY 2019-20) is shown in Annex A of this announcement.

Conditions of funding

13. This funding must only be used for the purpose(s) for which it is being allocated; that is, for the provision of additional counsellors. 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. A definition of Counselling (for the purposes of this funding) is provided in paragraph 10 of the baseline survey in [Annex D of the original announcement](#).
14. Institutions may identify qualified counsellors who are registered with statutory regulators not included on the Professional Standards Agency (PSA) register, particularly when investing in a specific type of counselling support, for example, the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP). In such cases, please discuss this with Emma Roberts before committing the resource.
15. Institutions should ensure that any additional counselling provision is able to be accessed by students in an appropriate format during the COVID-19 emergency, e.g. online or telephone counselling, and be conscious of the flexibility required to reflect the diverse needs of the student population. Institutions should also ensure that counsellors have received adequate training to deliver counselling remotely, and that online security and data protection measures are in place to ensure confidentiality. Further information is available from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)².
16. A principle of collaboration underpins our approach to funding allocations, and we would ask institutions to build on this in the next Academic Year. This includes collaboration across institutions with regard to counselling services, and in relation to developing partnerships with NHS Scotland, Health and Social Care Partnerships, and third sector counselling organisations.
17. We may wish to approach institutions further into the Academic Year regarding aggregate outcome data on the impact of the investment. Where possible, institutions should evidence outcomes for students from counselling provision, utilising measurement tools that have been validated for assessing counselling outcomes.
18. All institutions must utilise, or source, suitable premises for their counselling services, following the Scottish Government's COVID-19 Roadmap guidance³. These premises must be appropriate and accessible for all students seeking support. This does not apply to students accessing virtual counselling outwith the institution's premises. However, we are aware that during the COVID-19

² [BACP Working online resources](#)

³ [Scottish Government's COVID-19 Roadmap guidance](#)

emergency, students seeking support may not have access to a suitably private and secure environment. We would suggest that you consult BACP or Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland (COSCA) for further guidance about these issues.

19. All institutions should update their baseline survey to monitor progress towards the Scottish Government’s commitment of providing 80 additional counsellors. A baseline survey for AY 2019-20 will be sent in a separate communication in October. **Please ensure that you inform SFC of any changes to the contact details for your institution’s Mental Health lead by emailing eroberts@sfc.ac.uk.**
20. SFC will be engaging with institutions during the COVID-19 emergency to understand and support them in their response. All institutions should note that SFC will request brief quarterly updates to inform progress towards the 80 additional counsellors committed to in the Programme for Government.

Payment of funds

21. SFC will make payment of funding to universities in AY 2020-21 in line with the following profile:

Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21
0.0%	0.0%	21.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	6.0%	6.0%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%

22. Incorporated colleges should drawdown funding as required with up to 54% of their funding allocation to be drawn down in FY 2020-21 (by end of March 2021) and no more than 46% to be drawn down between April and July 2021.
23. The allocation of funding for AY 2020-21 and the above profile is subject to the transfer of funding from the Scottish Government in Financial Year 2021-22.

Acceptance of grant

24. Institutions are invited to formally accept this offer of funding by emailing Graeme Scotland, Senior Budgeting & Reporting Officer, email: gscotland@sfc.ac.uk by 30 September 2020.

Further information

25. Please contact Fiona Burns, Assistant Director - Access & Outcomes, tel: 0131 313 6517, email: fburns@sfc.ac.uk or Emma Roberts, Policy/Analysis Officer, tel: 0131 313 6570, email: eroberts@sfc.ac.uk.

L. MacDonald

Lorna MacDonald
Director of Finance

Funding allocations for AY 2020-21

College/region allocation of funding for counsellors		
College/Region	Total funding allocation*	No. of counsellors (FTE)**
Ayrshire College	£103,000	2.29
Borders College	£81,000	1.80
Dumfries & Galloway College	£86,000	1.91
Dundee & Angus College	£120,000	2.67
Edinburgh College	£122,000	2.71
Fife College	£124,000	2.76
Forth Valley College	£92,000	2.04
Glasgow Region	£312,000	6.93
Highlands & Islands Region***	£292,000	6.49
Lanarkshire Region	£130,000	2.89
Newbattle Abbey College	£12,000	0.27
North East Scotland College	£111,000	2.47
Sabhal Mòr Ostaig	£14,000	0.31
SRUC****	£101,000	2.24
West College Scotland	£122,000	2.71
West Lothian College	£83,000	1.84
Total	£1,905,000	42.33
* Numbers rounded to the nearest £1,000. ** Rounded to the nearest 0.01 FTE counsellor. *** Includes funding for UHI's HE students. **** Includes funding for SRUC's HE students.		

University allocation of funding for counsellors		
Institution	Total funding allocation*	No. of counsellors (FTE)**
Aberdeen, University of	£93,000	2.07
Abertay University	£63,000	1.40
Dundee, University of	£112,000	2.49
Edinburgh Napier University	£93,000	2.07
Edinburgh, University of	£167,000	3.71
Glasgow Caledonian University	£123,000	2.73
Glasgow School of Art	£56,000	1.24
Glasgow, University of	£191,000	4.24
Heriot-Watt University	£93,000	2.07
Highlands & Islands, University of the***	-	-
Open University in Scotland	£100,000	2.22
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	£64,000	1.42
Robert Gordon University	£87,000	1.93
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	£51,000	1.13
SRUC***	-	-
St Andrews, University of	£87,000	1.93
Stirling, University of	£94,000	2.09
Strathclyde, University of	£150,000	3.33
West of Scotland, University of the	£116,000	2.58
Total	£1,740,000	38.65
<p>* Numbers rounded to the nearest £1,000. ** Rounded to the nearest 0.01 FTE counsellor. *** Funding for UHI's and SRUC's HE students are included within the college allocation.</p>		