

## **EIS Response to the SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education**

The EIS is pleased to submit its views to the SFC Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability in Further and Higher Education sectors as requested by the Scottish Government. The EIS is the only recognised trade union representing further education college lecturers in Scotland, with around 5,000 in membership. The EIS is also recognised in many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Scotland, particularly in the newer HEIs, with around 1,400 members – almost all being academics. The EIS has set up self-governing associations for its further education and higher education members in order for them manage their distinct interests.

***a) What do you think works well in the current further and higher education arrangements that we should keep in order to secure Scotland's inclusive social and economic recovery from the current pandemic? How can we best preserve and strengthen those features of education, research and innovation in Scotland that we most prize, in a very challenging funding environment?***

- i. Most colleges within the further education sector are part of the public sector and the sector accountable to Ministers (and ultimately Parliament) through a clear governance structure of regional college boards and assigned college boards. The further education colleges are arranged in (FE) regions that allows regional and strategic planning and delivery of provision throughout Scotland. This FE system and governance structure was implemented after the last financial crisis and led to 42 or so colleges being merged into 26 colleges. The EIS believes that these governance and regional structures go some way to ensuring that this public service is well governed, democratically accountable and subject to proper levels of transparency and scrutiny. Some FE colleges, however, lie outwith the public sector, and the EIS believes there is still some work to do to deepen the public accountability of the sector.
- ii. The FE sector has around 130,000 students studying a wide range of courses from non-award bearing courses to higher education level. Colleges successfully deliver a wide range of subjects and a huge range of qualifications to a diverse group of students. Students may use colleges to tentatively re-enter formal education via access or non-award bearing courses, whilst there are others that complete higher education courses (such as HND) that transition into the third year of a degree award at a local university. Colleges have been very successful at ensuring wide access to students, and indeed the FE student body has a higher proportion of socio-economic disadvantaged students than the population as a whole.
- iii. Colleges deliver a range of courses; from academic courses to vocational courses that are aligned to local student and employer needs. Colleges allow students (many of whom are workers) to reskill for new employment prospects or to upskill for higher skilled employment opportunities.

- iv. Put simply, the EIS believes that further education colleges offer students of all backgrounds an opportunity to improve their skills, education and employment prospects – and thereby are a critical part in securing Scotland’s inclusive, social and economic recovery from the current pandemic.
- v. Whilst there is some use of virtual learning environments and digitalised content in colleges, the vocational courses and the diverse range of students means that college teaching is mostly face-to-face. Given the nature of college students and the mission of colleges, the EIS expects that this is unlikely to change significantly after the pandemic.
- vi. Despite previous low levels of online teaching, college lecturers reacted in a rapid and agile manner to digitalise their work for online delivery and to deal with assessment. Students also stepped up to the challenge – in what was a period of crisis teaching. Whilst not all students were able to access this work, this enabled most students to successfully complete their courses. The EIS conducted a student survey<sup>1</sup> that showed that whilst most students had online access, socio-economically disadvantaged students were less likely to have online digital access to learning and more likely to have caring responsibilities that frustrated participation in online learning. These findings are consistent with the Sutton Trust findings for school pupils, and what it described as the “digital divide” between those pupils who have and those who do not have access to their own digital device with broadband.
- vii. The EIS has been concerned with the lack of consistency across colleges in dealing with student assessment during the lockdown. There has been little leadership from the SQA or collaborative working across colleges. Whilst collaborative working between college lecturers has taken place across multiple campus regional colleges, little sector-wide collaboration (i.e. between colleges) on assessment has taken place.
- viii. The EIS wishes to highlight the work of the UHI FE colleges that seemed to deal with the lockdown very effectively. The EIS believes that the extensive digital learning infrastructure and tradition of distance learning played a part in this.
- ix. The EIS also wishes to highlight the “2+2” course arrangements that exist between colleges and many universities. This arrangement allows students to study two years at a college and then move into the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a university to then complete a degree. This structure works well in helping young people from socio-economically disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds to obtain university degrees that they may not otherwise obtain.

## Universities

- x. The HE sector plays a central and critical role in realising Scotland’s ambition to be a knowledge economy. This is well covered in the recently published Higgins Report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eis.org.uk/Content/images/corona/FE%20Survey.pdf>

- xi. Scottish universities deliver higher education to almost 50% of young people domiciled in Scotland, which is a high participation rate. The skills that graduates get from the Scottish 4 year degree are well recognised and prepare graduates for the world of work with subject knowledge, life experience and the soft skills required for employment.
- xii. The higher education (HE) sector also responded effectively and rapidly to the lockdown. Some universities pre-empted the lockdown by closing campuses to students early. University lecturers and staff acted in an agile manner to ensure that teaching continued online and that assessment procedures allowed students to complete their courses or graduate from their degree.
- xiii. The higher education (HE) sector in Scotland is a diverse group of HEIs, ranging from large international facing research intensive universities to small specialist institutions specialising in teaching in a narrow field. The higher education sector is outwith the public sector, but almost all HEIs are more than (in one way or another) 50% publicly funded. There are four Scottish Universities in the World Top 200 which is a remarkable achievement given the size of Scotland. The HE sector has around 200,000 students studying a wide range of courses and degrees, to post-graduate level. The number of students in the HE sector is high by international standards.
- xiv. Scottish universities have a high level of digitalisation with an extensive use of virtual online learning environments. This made the rapid move to online teaching relatively straightforward, although many lecturing staff made extensive efforts to record lectures from their homes to upload for students.
- xv. The fact that universities award their own degrees allowed them to amend their assessment procedures quickly in order to allow students to progress or graduate.

***b) What do you think colleges, universities and specialist institutions should stop doing, or do differently, in order to contribute effectively to an inclusive social and economic recovery? (You may wish to comment on teaching and skills development, sectoral and employer needs and employability, research, innovation and knowledge exchange, widening access and equalities issues.)***

- i. The FE sector delivers education and training to students of all ages to both develop them as individuals in order for them to lead fulfilled lives that contribute to the wider society and to develop their employability skills and find the best job possible for them. Colleges deliver a range of courses in order to deliver on these twin aims. The EIS supports these twin aims, which it believes are complementary.
- ii. A key part of a regional college's role is to interact with local employers to determine what skills' gaps exist and to provide courses to students to deliver these skills.

- iii. It is also important that colleges, regionally, deliver on national or sectoral initiatives set out by national agencies or the Scottish Government. These may include developing and delivering courses to upskill or reskill workers for the green economy or digital economy. Furthermore, it is a key role of all educational establishments to ensure that students have obtained skills and experiences that make them generally more employable – these are sometimes called “soft skills”.
- iv. The EIS is clear that colleges have a key role to play and need to react to the needs of local employers and national initiatives. However, the EIS is also clear that colleges also need to respond to student demand – be they young people before entering the workplace, single parents, part-time workers, unemployed or workers. Colleges need to deliver courses that simply meet the aspirations of people – their students. In the short term these courses may not deliver greater employment, but they may make happier workers with a wider range of skills and knowledge. This has societal benefits.
- v. The EIS rejects the notion that colleges’ primary or sole function is to support businesses or employers. The EIS believes that a publicly funded further education sector is a public service that serves the public good; society as a whole rather than only the narrow needs of business.
- vi. The EIS would, therefore, urge the Review, and the Scottish Government, to avoid the mistakes made during the last recession – in which the Government tried to refocus the role of the FE sector to meet the needs of businesses by concentrating on delivering award bearing courses for young people which had the effect of reducing access to further education for part-time workers, women, older people (i.e. over the age of 25) and workers in employment. The last recession also led to a funding cut to the FE Sector.
- vii. Inter-college collaboration could have been more extensive during the lockdown and may have led to greater consistency in course assessments. The EIS believes that colleges need to collaborate more as component parts of a FE service rather than working individually, or worse, acting as if they are in competition with each other.
- viii. The lack of inter-college collaboration in the FE sector has also permeated the sector leadership’s willingness to engage collectively with stakeholders. Colleges Scotland were unwilling to meaningfully engage with the EIS at the NJNC to push for a sector approach to the lockdown. Colleges Scotland also refused to meet with the SQA and EIS to discuss assessment concerns. The EIS believes that the FE sector’s leadership should be more inclusive and collaborative.

## **Universities**

- ix. Whilst Scottish universities provides higher education to almost 50% of young people, it does not provide higher education to this proportion of young people that are socio-economically disadvantaged (e.g. SIMD 20). Scottish universities

have a disproportionately lower level of socio-economically disadvantaged students than English universities. Whilst the Scottish Government has made efforts to widen access, and this has led to more students from SIMD 20 entering into higher education, more needs to be done. For some universities there is a tension between their aspirations of being world-leading centres of academic excellence with highly competitive student applications from around the world and the Scottish Government's aspiration that all universities are accessible to students from the most deprived communities in Scotland.

- x. The disproportionately low numbers of BME students and staff also remains an EIS concern in the tertiary sector, and the persistent gender pay gap. The University sector has used various equality initiatives to improve equality and diversity, and credit must be given to areas of progress. Nevertheless, universities need to be more accessible and better reflect the society that have created them and fund them. Socio-economically disadvantaged people, BME people, disabled people and older people need to be able to access universities or they will remain bastions of the white middle class.
- xi. Whilst universities do have vocational degrees – in that some graduates are being trained for certain professions – they generally provide a universal education to people that is not focussed on employment. The EIS believes that this is right and proper. Universities, therefore, tend to be student demand-led in terms of their courses, as opposed to being employer demand-led. In some cases, this can lead to a delay in universities having courses that meet employers' needs.
- xii. If universities are going to pro-actively work to address a potential increase in unemployment, then they may have to work more closely with local employers.
- xiii. Furthermore, universities may wish to explore offering more shorter courses to workers or professionals in order for them to re-skill or, in particular, for them to up-skill.
- xiv. Universities are designed to generate knowledge and ideas, not to generate wealth or drive a Scottish economic recovery. The EIS does not wish for universities to be re-focussed to serve business or employment needs. Nevertheless, universities' discoveries, expertise and knowledge do generate wealth – especially in their knowledge transfer, innovation and research. The EIS supports this notion.
- xv. Maximising “impact” from knowledge transfer, innovation and research has long been an aim of the Scottish Government policy. There is scope for improvement in all three areas – and better networks will be required between universities, the public sector and especially businesses.
- xvi. It is possible that greater support may be required from the SFC to facilitate supporting spin-off start-ups and sharing intellectual property with business.

- xvii. The extent to which SFC funds and thereby encourages 4\* “world-leading” research as opposed to research that may directly drive recovery within Scotland has been raised elsewhere in this submission. Likewise, that the individual reputation of academics/researchers is linked to international facing work (and thereby more highly rated journals) rather than Scottish specific issues is also an issue that may limit supporting Scottish economic growth. Whether there is scope for this type of work to be facilitated – as additionality - by the SFC in the newer universities (that tend to do less 3\* and 4\* research) is something that may need to be explored if the older universities are reluctant to engage with Scottish level issues.

***c) How can colleges, universities and specialist institutions best support Scotland’s international connectedness and competitiveness (sic) in the post-pandemic, post-EU membership environment?***

- i. Universities have always been international facing, and the larger research-intensive Scottish universities are very international in outlook and composition and may even be described as universities in Scotland. Other universities, in particular the post-92 universities are less international, and they are composed of proportionally more Scottish domiciled students. All are reliant on public funding from the Scottish Government.
- ii. Universities are competitive in nature and seek to attract the best students. The number of Scottish domiciled students per university is effectively capped by the Scottish Government, whilst international (and rest of the UK) student numbers are not capped. Students from Scottish universities are drawn from around the world and indeed from different parts of Scotland – and it is usual for Scottish domiciled students to leave home to attend a Scottish university.
- iii. FE colleges in Scotland are not international facing and do not compete for the best students; most students are Scottish domiciled. Scottish college students do not generally leave home to attend college and they usually attend their closest college (or the closest college with the course they wish to attend). These patterns reflect the mission of colleges and means that they are not dependant on international students or international collaboration. Unlike universities, the college sector as a whole is unlikely to be significantly affected by changes in international student numbers or fewer international connections.
- iv. The HE sector’s international connectedness and competitiveness are both likely to be significantly and adversely affected by the pandemic and by Brexit; indeed, these two events are likely to compound each other.
- v. Three years ago, there were five Scottish universities in the world’s top 200, now there are four and they have dropped down the rankings. Scottish universities were already facing challenges in terms of their international competitiveness before the pandemic and Brexit. A number of Scottish universities have had financial problems over recent years. Some of these challenges are domestic but there is also greater

investment in higher education in other far eastern countries and an expansion of courses delivered through the medium of English in other European countries.

- vi. The pandemic is likely to reduce international student numbers, which is going to have a significant impact on all HEIs, with the international facing ancient universities being worst hit. The HE sector, together with the Government and national agencies need to mitigate the reduction in international students by ensuring that they are as safe as possible, and they also need to ensure that international study here is easy to arrange, with significant benefits and with digital fallback to courses if there are any future localised lockdowns.
- vii. The pandemic is also likely to lead to less international travel and, therefore, international networks and conferences may have to move to online. The higher education sector will need to embrace the opportunities that come from online conferences and engage with them in order to mitigate the effects of less international travel.
- viii. It has also been reported that the pandemic (and the associated lockdown) has led some academics to increase their outputs, whilst female academics in particular have had a drop in output due to their greater caring responsibilities. Universities need to develop gender equality strategies to support female academics.
- ix. The Covid pandemic seems to have brought some of these challenges to a head.
- x. Brexit is likely to loosen international connections since there will be a reduction in EU funded grants and associated work. This is unlikely to be offset by the UK or Scottish Government funding. This will affect the pre-92 HEIs in particular.
- xi. Scottish universities employ many international staff – its excellence attracting and retaining leading academic staff from around the world. These staff bring with them international networks and knowledge that are invaluable to universities in Scotland. Colleges also employ many international staff. Scottish universities and colleges need to make a sustained effort to retain these staff and continue to attract international talent. This means providing support with bureaucratic and administrative processes to support the employee and her/his family; e.g. helping with accommodation, registering with doctors, finding schools, visa forms, etc.

**d) *What opportunities and threats does the post-pandemic environment hold for colleges, universities and specialist institutions? For institutional leaders, how are you planning to address these challenges and opportunities?***

- i. The Sutton Trust Report published on 29 July 2020 stated that:

*“As the Trust have demonstrated throughout this COVID-19 impact series, from early years, through to schools, apprenticeships, access to university and into the world of work, the crisis will impact on disadvantaged young people through every life stage.”*

*“It will take a concerted effort, from all parts of society, to lessen this impact and ensure all young people have an equal chance to showcase their talent and potential.”*

- ii. Sir Peter Lampl, founder and chairman of the Sutton Trust, said: *“It is crystal clear that young people will bear the brunt for years to come of the massive downturn caused by Covid-19 - and young people from poorer backgrounds will be most affected.”*
- iii. This recession has been described by some economists as a K-shaped recession which will affect professional graduate workers far less than blue collar or semi-skilled professions, or as the FT<sup>2</sup> put it:

*“For the wealthy and those able to work from home, the pandemic has represented an inconvenience. Life has gone on, albeit challenged by new technologies and new routines. Their lives have not been upended by the outbreak.*

*That has not been the case for those outside the work-from-home bubble. Service workers have been laid off en-masse, while many essential workers have had little choice but to work even as their employers have awkwardly and inconsistently adapted workplaces to a pandemic environment. That the outbreak has hit working-class communities hardest is hardly a surprise.”*

- iv. Some economists believe that unemployment in the UK will rise to around 10% of the workforce by the end of the year (after the furlough scheme closes). A recent Sutton Trust Report has stated that 40% of surveyed employers will be cutting back on graduate recruitment.

## **Colleges**

- v. As previously stated, colleges deliver education and training to students of all ages in order to both develop them as individuals in order to lead fulfilled lives that contribute to wider society and to develop their employability skills in order to find the best job possible for them. The role of colleges is important in normal times, but during this recession the role of colleges is critical.
- vi. It is colleges that largely cater for the socio-economic groups that are being hit by this recession. It is the workers within service industries that need to be re-skilled and up-skilled to find new employment. The demand for this education and training will increase with the increase in unemployment.
- vii. The recently published Higgins Report<sup>3</sup> stated:

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/0ebfb7ca-a681-11ea-a27c-b8aa85e36b7e>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/towards-robust-resilient-wellbeing-economy-scotland-report-advisory-group-economic-recovery/pages/6/>



*“Colleges have been instrumental in delivering workforce up-skilling, re-skilling and soft skills; and we heard that the college sector has already helped to support organisations across Scotland to rebuild their businesses and rebuild their confidence. But this will need to go further.”*

*“Colleges are an agile, collaborative, and inclusive national asset to which the Scottish Government allocates significant resource. As in the aftermath of 2008, colleges will need to be at the heart of the recovery effort.”*

- viii. The Higgins Report also suggested the *“introduction by colleges of short course provision targeted at furloughed staff and those seeking to retrain. Colleges can underpin the acceleration of Developing our Young Workforce and ensure the continued availability of a work-based curriculum that helps to offset increases in youth unemployment.”*
- ix. The Scottish Government has developed and expanded apprenticeship programmes in recent years, and the EIS sees this as an area of growth in the immediate future. This is a means of increasing the number of qualified practitioners (electricians, plumbers, etc) available to the business. The college sector is in a good position to play a more prominent part – e.g. by acting as training providers. Consideration also needs to be given to creating apprenticeship programmes within colleges that do not require a sponsoring employer.
- x. There has been a suggestion by some commentators that colleges should deliver “microcredits” and “bitesize” chunks of learning designed for specific industry needs. This would lead to a risk of de-skilling the workforce; rather than learning the underpinning theory of a car engine, for example, learners are taught how to use Company X’s machines to do Y to one type of engine. In the long run this undermines the ability of the worker to seek work elsewhere, and the fundamental nature of learning in colleges. This was identified by Prof Mark Priestley at the recent EIS Professional Learning Conference – the EIS believes that education is about learning about stuff as well as learning how to do X because an employer wants X. The challenge for colleges is, therefore, to ensure educational integrity to the larger and wider offering to students whilst supporting employers’ needs.

## **Universities**

- xi. Whilst some Scottish universities have successfully widened access to improve access to poorer students, the sector as a whole has failed to recruit a proportionate number of students from lower socio-economic groups. One challenge for the HE sector is to show the Government that it can deliver higher education fairly to all groups in society.
- xii. A number of graduates are likely to have a difficult time finding graduate employment as a result of this recession. Universities may, therefore, need to

introduce ways of better preparing graduates for employment and explore whether their range of degrees best prepare graduates for the employment opportunities that will arise.

- xiii. Fewer graduate employment opportunities may also bring about an increase in post-graduate study, especially PhDs. This may be an opportunity for Scotland as some subjects have very low levels of Scottish domiciled post-graduate students (as they are dominated by international students).
- xiv. Universities can deliver research or ideas that may actively support the post-pandemic recovery either in economic or medical or technology or other means. This may raise the public-reputation of the sector. A threat is that if the sector's research is seen to be irrelevant then general research funding may be reduced in order to concentrate on HE teaching or veered to the college sector.
- xv. Universities also develop knowledge or technology that can be spun out as new-start companies that could support an economic recovery – especially with “green” technology. There is an opportunity for universities.
- xvi. The key role for universities in up-skilling the workforce and engaging in research and innovation to drive economic recovery and diversification into the green economy is already acknowledged by the Scottish Government and is highlighted in the Higgins Report.
- xvii. The funding model used by some Scottish Universities is to use large numbers of International and rest of UK students to enable high levels of spending and investment. Such funding streams have allowed some universities to retain healthy finances in recent years which has enabled lower staff-student ratios and greater research time. Clearly, this model is susceptible to any change in international or rest of UK student numbers coming to Scottish universities.
- xviii. In recent years, many universities have successfully reduced the number of zero hours contracted staff that deliver teaching (and other duties). Nevertheless, the sector still makes use of casualised and precarious modes of employment for large numbers of tutors, lecturers and other junior academic staff. In some universities, tutors and casualised lecturers are used to deliver much of undergraduate teaching that the Scottish universities are going to contribute to pulling Scotland out of a future recession. However, the EIS believes the universities and SFC can do more to ensure that these workers hold fair and secure contracts.
- xix. Specialist Institutions not only have the challenges associated with the HE sector, but also the challenges arising from their area of speciality. The Royal Scottish Conservatoire needs to play a role to protect the performing arts which has been hard hit by the nature of the pandemic. The SRUC also needs to ensure that it supports the rural economy which is likely to have Brexit compounding problems arising from the pandemic.

***e) What forms of collaboration within the tertiary education eco-system would best enable a coherent and effective response to these challenges and opportunities?***

- i. The term 'national tertiary eco-system' was promoted in the recently published Cumberford-Little Report and it was described as a 'concept' and the use of the term above suggests that the concept has been accepted by the SFC despite there being no sectoral discussions or adoption of the concept by the Scottish Government (as far as the EIS is aware).
- ii. The Cumberford-Little Report was written before the Covid-19 lockdown and before the scale and nature of the looming recession was understood. The Report's<sup>4</sup> statement that "engagement with employers is the core focus of this report" shows the narrowness of the Report and its failure to understand that a college's mission is also to support students and communities.
- iii. The Cumberford-Little Report also recommended that colleges should pull out of the public sector and focus their work on serving businesses – both local and international - whilst looking to compete with the HE sector by delivering two year degrees in a single tertiary sector. The privatisation and deregulation route, concentrating on commercialisation and globalisation, was flawed even before the covid-19 pandemic and its putative effect on international students. Successive negative press articles, relating to senior management remuneration for example, suggest that accountability needs to be strengthened rather than relaxed.
- iv. Articulation agreements between colleges and universities need to be expanded. The four-year learner journey of the 2+2 programme between colleges and universities is well proven. This shows how colleges and universities do complement each other and work together within a tertiary sector. The refusal of some older universities to be involved in articulation agreements with colleges needs to be directly addressed by the Scottish Government.
- v. The Ancient Universities in particular give no credit to college students that complete some HNC or HNDs, requiring for example that some HND students start at first year rather than third year. This makes a mockery of a tertiary sector and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. It also means that public money and student time is wasted on duplication – and these students tend to come from socio-economic backgrounds.
- vi. College engagement with local employers is well established and some universities may wish to learn from this.
- vii. The merger of the 3 land-based FE colleges with the SAC to form the SRUC may have re-invigorated the SAC but it has left a gap in land-based FE provision in Scotland in

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<sup>4</sup> "Notwithstanding the priority Government and partners ascribe to individuals and communities, engagement with employers is the core focus of this report".

rural areas. There is scope for improving access to land-based programmes for some rural communities.

**f) How can SFC, alongside government and other enterprise, skills and education-focused agencies, best support colleges, universities and specialist institutions to make their full contribution to Scotland's inclusive, green and education-led recovery? In particular, you may wish to draw out:**

- ***How scarce public resources should be prioritised to drive recovery***

- i. The EIS rejects the notion that public resources are scarce. The reality is that the Scottish Government spending is at a record level – not least due to Barnett consequential from the UK Government. The Scottish Government has opportunities to raise taxation for even greater investment during this recession.
- ii. The EIS does not believe that public funding is a zero sum game, and therefore does not believe that funding should always follow priorities. Ultimately, funding will need to follow those programmes and institutions that show that they support people in their education and employment.
- iii. The EIS has set out elsewhere in this response ways in which universities and colleges may drive recovery.

- ***Particular areas of collaboration between agencies that would best support the sectors' contributions***

- iv. Within the college sector there are a number of agencies that have a direct effect on colleges and their work. It has become clear to the EIS that the SQA does not have a full understanding of how their qualifications are assessed in colleges. The role of the SDS sometimes adds complexity, confusion and bureaucracy to the FE sector. The number of agencies and bodies involved in both sectors is extensive, and there would seem to be an advantage in having a committee drawn from these and other stakeholders to oversee and co-ordinate the strategic and operational elements of the sectors' work.

- ***Adaptations to SFC's funding and accountability frameworks to promote agile and collaborative action by the sectors to build Scotland's recovery***

- v. The SFC needs to be more proactive in working with different Government agencies and stakeholders, including trade unions.
- vi. The SFC Research Excellence Grant focusses research payment to universities delivering 4\* (world leading) research and to a lesser extent, 3\* (internationally excellent) research. The SFC does not fund university departments for 1\* (recognised nationally) research and 2\* (recognised internationally) research. The EIS understands that lecturers (who by definition have teaching and research contracts) in some universities have been advised not to carry out any research

unless they have funding for that research. Furthermore, the EIS understands that some universities are seeking to focus lecturers' efforts to maximise their teaching and to reduce collaboration with business/knowledge transfer etc. The HE funding system and some universities' finances are, therefore, forcing lecturers to concentrate on teaching at the expense of research or knowledge transfer that may support recovery.

- vii. The SFC focus on funding 4\* world leading research may lead to other research ideas that could benefit Scotland not being carried out. Furthermore, the way universities and academics themselves consider peer status and reputation is largely on the quality of their peer published articles – they are aiming for 3\* and ideally 4\* papers. In other words, successful researchers are looking at pushing back the boundaries of knowledge, ideas and technology on a global perspective as opposed to looking at what can directly build Scotland's wealth (on human and commercial terms).
  - viii. The EIS, as a trade union representing researchers, fundamentally believes that researchers should be funded and encouraged to carry out world leading research that increases knowledge or explores new ideas – in whatever areas they choose. Research cannot be limited to short-term commercial or national aims.
  - ix. Scotland has 20 universities, with a large number of lecturers, researchers and other research active staff. The SFC's research funding formula, in focussing on world leading research, is not using the vast reservoir of skilled staff in order to build Scotland's economic recovery. The EIS is suggesting that the SFC consider how additional funding may be used to encourage research that may have a direct bearing on building Scotland's recovery.
- ***How SFC's funding and accountability frameworks should ensure that equality and wide access to educational opportunity are promoted as key elements of the recovery for younger people and adults***
- x. The SFC's use of Outcome Agreements is, in principle, an effective way of disbursing funds for specific purposes and ensuring that the funding is accountable. In practice, they seem to work better with some institutions than others.
  - xi. The SFC uses Outcome Agreements to drive institutions efforts to improve equality and wide access for educational opportunity. This has not been successful in all cases and the SFC seems reluctant to use Outcome Agreements to force fundable institutions to deliver equality targets, including widening access. The EIS was concerned with the results of a survey conducted last year by the EHRC<sup>5</sup> on racism in HE. The EIS acknowledges the SFC work in facilitating a response to these findings – progress seems to be at the rate of the HEIs

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/racial-harassment-higher-education-our-inquiry>

choosing. There continues to be equality issues on gender and race within the HE sector in particular.

- ***What support SFC and government could give institutions to adapt to a changed environment***

- xii. The Scottish Government will need to invest more in colleges and universities to support workers and people out of the forthcoming recession and to drive the economy forward in order to create future jobs and prosperity. Colleges in particular will need to expand their capacity to support greater numbers of students – in particular young people and recently unemployed people.
- xiii. The Scottish Government has thus far only used additional funding from the UK Government (arising from Barnett consequentials) to support the tertiary sector. The Scottish Government should increase public investment in colleges, universities and other essential public services using its additional tax raising powers, if necessary.

**August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

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