Scottish Funding Council
Submission to the Scottish Parliament
Education and Skills Committee
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Introduction

1. We welcome the opportunity to provide a written statement to the Committee on SFC’s work and its contribution to Scottish Government outcomes, the Christie Principles, and the Scottish Government’s climate change targets. We provide below a brief description of our organisation and follow that by giving a response to each of your requests using, for ease of reading, a question and answer format.

Who we are

2. The Scottish Funding Council is the national, strategic body for the funding of further and higher education in Scotland. We fund, support and care for:

- 25 colleges
- 19 universities and other higher education institutions
- 470,000 students in colleges and universities
- 49,000 college and university full-time equivalent staff
- A total annual budget of around £1.6 billion.

3. Our ambition is that Scotland will be the best place in the world to learn, to educate, to research, and to innovate, with colleges and universities making a major contribution to Scotland’s social, cultural and economic development. As a public body, our task is to care for and develop the whole system of colleges and universities and their connections and contribution to Scotland’s educational, social, cultural, and economic life.

What are the key outcomes that the Scottish Government expects SFC to deliver for the current budget period and how do these relate to National Outcomes and Indicators in the National Performance Framework?

4. We publish a Strategic Plan every three years in consultation with the Scottish Government, colleges, universities and other stakeholders with an interest in further and higher education. The Strategic Plan is agreed by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and sets out the key outcomes which the Scottish Government expects SFC to deliver over a three-year period. Our current Strategic Plan for the period 2015-18 – which includes Financial Year (FY) 2016-17 – has three key outcomes:

- High-quality learning and teaching
- World-leading research
- Greater innovation in the economy.
5. Underneath each of these Strategic Plan outcomes are a number of themes and a planned Programme of Change. In developing the outcomes and themes, we are influenced by:

- Strategic objectives in Ministerial Letters of Guidance to SFC.
- The Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework, including relevant National Outcomes and Indicators.
- The Scottish Government’s Programme for Government.
- Scotland’s Economic Strategy.

6. All of our Strategic Plan themes support one or more of the National Outcomes and Indicators. The Annex to this written statement summarises the relationship between our current outcomes and themes and:

- The relevant National Outcomes and Indicators in the National Performance Framework and
- The strategic objectives set-out in our Letter of Guidance for the current budget period.

**How does SFC measure its impact on National Outcomes and National Indicators?**

7. In 2012, we introduced Outcome Agreements (OAs) with individual college regions and universities. Outcome Agreements set out what universities and colleges will deliver in return for their funding from SFC, and are used to report on progress against a set of national measures and a number of institutional or regional measures. We have also developed an overall Performance Framework for SFC with a range of measures, which allows us to monitor progress in delivering our Strategic Plan and measure the impact of our strategies. We report publically on our progress and impact in our Annual Report and Accounts.

8. In addition, we collect and publish a wide-range of other data which allows us to measure the impact and effectiveness of our funding and strategies, including:

- The Research Excellence Framework (REF) – the UK-wide system for assessing the quality of research in universities.
- A set of statistical publications which we produce as a provider of national statistics.
- Our annual *Learning for All* publication, which reports on progress with widening access to further and higher education. (This will be replaced as part of the implementation of the work of the Commission for Widening Access.)
9. As our Strategic Plan outcomes and themes, and the national measures that we use to assess progress with Outcome Agreements, link to the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework, we are able to draw upon the wide-range of data and information which we collect to measure also our impact on the National Outcomes and Indicators.

What is the latest data and assessment on SFC’s impact?

10. We provide below a brief assessment of our impact in relation to SFC’s three Strategic Plan outcomes.

Outcome 1: High-quality teaching and learning

11. Our aim is to achieve an outstanding system of learning which is accessible and diverse, and where students progress successfully with the ability, ideas and ambition to ‘make a difference’.

12. Our university students are increasingly successful in progressing into employment or further study:

[Graph showing percentage of graduates from Scottish universities entering work or further study]

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency Performance Indicators

13. SFC is improving access to learning to both colleges and universities for students from a wide range of backgrounds – though much more progress needs to be made. The proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants to universities from the 20% and 40% most deprived areas is rising:
14. Colleges also continue to devote a significant and increasing amount of resource to meeting the needs of learners from the most deprived areas:
15. The college sector has delivered steady improvement on learner success. However, in 2014-15 there was a 1.9 percentage point drop in performance for students enrolled in full-time FE and a 0.1 percentage point drop in full-time HE:

![Graph showing % of enrolled students successfully achieving a recognised qualification]

16. SFC has agreements with colleges as a whole to increase the FE success rate to 69% and the HE success rate to 72% by 2016-17 as part of our outcome agreement negotiations.

17. Overall retention rates at university have been increasing. In 2014-15 retention rates for full-time first degree Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants to Scottish universities increased to 90.5% from 88.7% in 2009-10, close to SFC’s national ambition of at retaining at least 91% by 2016-17:

![Graph showing Proportion of full-time Scottish domiciled First Degree entrants retained into year 2]

18. There has also been a broad upward trend across most protected characteristic groups during that period. For example, retention rates for the 20% most deprived areas increased to 87.5% in 2014-15, continuing the upward trend for this group from 83.9% in 2009-10.
19. The numbers articulating from college to university with advanced standing is increasing and is on the way to securing the national ambition of 4,100 students articulating with advanced standing by 2016-17:

![The number and proportion of Scottish-domiciled learners articulating from college to degree level courses with advanced standing](image)

20. The results of the 2016 National Student Survey (NSS) provides evidence that the quality of the learner experience at Scottish universities has been maintained at a high standard. In 2016, 86% of students at Scottish institutions were satisfied with the overall quality of their programme of study, (86% in 2015, 87% in 2014, 86% in 2013), the same level as the averages for the UK and Wales (England 85%, Northern Ireland 89%).

**Outcome 2: World-leading research**

21. Our aim is to ensure that Scotland has world-leading universities, nationally and internationally connected, with a global reputation for their research.

22. Our long-term investment in university research is helping to make a significant contribution to the reputation and profile of our universities, as well as providing the strong foundation required for a more innovative economy. In 2015, Scotland had more universities ranked in the top 200 in the world per head of population than any other country except Luxembourg.¹

¹QS World University Rankings ([http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings](http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings))
23. And Scotland’s research competitiveness continues to be higher than the UK average, as measured by the percentage of submissions assessed as 3* and 4* in the Research Excellence Framework 2014:

24. Scotland also secures a higher share of UK Research Council income than what would be expected in proportion to population or size of university sector (around 15% compared to between 10% and 12%), although there has been a slight decrease over the past two years:
Outcome 3: Greater innovation in the economy

25. Our purpose here is to contribute to a national culture of enterprise and innovation leading to a more productive and sustainable economy.

26. Evidence from the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency’s survey of higher education - business interaction shows a significant improvement in 2015, with an increase of 20% in the number of ‘spin-out’ companies from universities in AY 2014-15, though the numbers are still down over the past five years.

27. We also measure progress using a proxy measure of innovation: the total volume of income generated by universities from knowledge exchange activity. This measure continued to remain high in AY 2014-15, the latest year for which we have full data.

How does SFC quality assure its work and is the quality assurance performed internally or externally?

28. The majority of the £1.6 billion funding that we allocate annually to colleges and universities is for teaching and learning, and for research. We have well-
developed arrangements in place to assess and enhance the quality of the teaching and learning, and the research delivered by colleges and universities. These are described briefly below.

**Learning and teaching**

29. We have a statutory responsibility for quality assurance of learning and teaching in the college and university sectors.

30. In the college sector, the purpose is to provide public assurance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities in Scotland’s colleges. The system gives primary responsibility to colleges for ensuring that academic standards are maintained and that quality is evaluated systematically and enhanced. We contract with Education Scotland to provide assurance on quality, and to support improvement in the college sector. We are introducing new quality arrangements for colleges during AY 2016-17, which contain a greater focus on the integration of performance monitoring of Outcome Agreements (OAs) with the quality framework for colleges, taking account of the regional context of colleges. Under the new arrangements there will be annual evaluative reports on all colleges, based on a national reporting system, evidenced by colleges, endorsed by stakeholders, and validated by Education Scotland and SFC.

31. In the university sector, the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) was established in 2003 to provide public assurance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities in Scotland’s university sector. The Framework promotes continuous improvement in quality and is delivered through a partnership between universities, students, SFC and the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAA). The system gives primary responsibility to universities for ensuring that academic standards are set and maintained and that quality is evaluated systematically and enhanced deliberately. SFC contracts with QAA Scotland to provide external assurance within these arrangements.

**Research**

32. For research undertaken in universities, we participate in the UK-wide Research Excellence Framework (REF), managed jointly by the four UK higher education funding bodies to assess the quality of research carried out in universities and HEIs across the UK. The exercise, which is undertaken periodically, allows the quality of research in Scottish universities to be compared against the best in the UK and benchmarked internationally.

33. The results of the last REF, undertaken in 2014, demonstrated that all universities in Scotland are undertaking world-leading research and that the proportion of Scottish research graded at the highest level had increased since the previous exercise in 2008.
In addition to the £1.6 billion funding that we allocate annually to colleges and universities, we have a separate operational budget for SFC of about £8 million annually, which is used to deliver our functions. The largest part of this budget, at about £5.5 million, is used to employ our staff. We do not operate a formal framework to quality assure our operational work, but do have a Strategic Plan commitment to demonstrate high standards of public administration and continually improve our performance.

We mainly use our internal management structures, including our Senior Management Team, to ensure that the standards of work within SFC are high. We have also introduced the Scottish Government’s 3-Step Improvement Framework for Public Services to help ensure that we are developing continuously our performance.

Can you identify how SFC’s strategies and financial plans prioritise streams of work which have the greatest impact in delivering outcomes?

We deliver our Strategic Plan priorities through a combination of:

- Outcome Agreement funding to colleges and universities and
- Strategic and capital funding.

The Outcome Agreement funding is linked to the negotiation of Outcome Agreements with college regions and individual universities, which set out how colleges and universities will deliver our Strategic Plan priorities and, in turn, Scottish Government priorities in return for public funding. As part of the Outcome Agreement approach, we set ambitious national and institutional targets to ensure that we can maximise the impact of our funding.

To give an example, in this year’s Outcome Agreement Guidance, under our Strategic Plan outcome of ‘High-quality teaching and learning’, our aim is achieve ‘A more successful economy and society with well prepared and skilled students progressing into jobs...’ . This aim supports three key Scottish Government’s National Outcomes:

- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

It also supports the following National Indicators:
- Improve the skill profile of the population.
- Increase the proportion of graduates in positive destinations.

40. To help achieve this aim, our Outcome Agreement Guidance therefore asks colleges and universities to ‘Adjust and adapt their curriculum in response to evidence of current and future skills needs of employers and the economy….’. We then use measures, such as the proportion of graduates entering professional occupations, to evaluate progress.

41. Our strategic and capital funding is also linked to our Strategic Plan priorities. In particular, we often use strategic funding to support collaborative initiatives between institutions and other stakeholders, particularly where a collaborative approach is likely to have a more significant impact than by colleges or universities acting alone.

42. To give a practical example, we have provided strategic funding, in the form of 103 additional funded student places, to help the University of Stirling and Forth Valley College develop four integrated honours degree programmes. These programmes integrate the development of technical skills and industry awareness with academic excellence, and are based on a 2+2 model in which the students are undergraduates of a four-year degree programme from day one and enrolled at both institutions, studying mainly in the college in years one and two, and at the University in years three and four.

43. The College and University have worked with over thirty industrial partners in designing and delivering the programmes, to ensure that graduates are ‘work-ready’ and meet the critical skills requirements of key industry sectors. The four joint programmes are BSc (Hons) in Applied Biological Sciences, Applied Computing, Heritage and Conservation, and Digital Media.

How is SFC taking forward the four Christie Principles of Reform in its work? Can you point to any particular programmes or reforms that demonstrate the principles?

44. We have sought to build the four key Christie Principles from the Commission on the Future of Public Services throughout our work. We give some examples below.

1. Public Services are built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience.

45. We do not provide services directly to people and communities, but the colleges and universities which we fund do of course serve their different communities. We have therefore used our Outcome Agreement approach and
funding to help improve the way in which colleges and universities can serve their communities. For example, our Outcome Agreements encourage colleges and universities to identify the particular needs of their communities and demonstrate how these can be better met. Many of the Outcome Agreements include targets that relate to the needs of communities or regions.

46. We have also used our Outcome Agreement approach and strategic funding to achieve major reform aimed at improving the delivery of further and higher education, and making it relevant to the needs of individuals and employers in particular regions. For example, we led a major programme of reform in the college sector which – through a college merger programme – delivered a range of benefits to both learners and regions including:

- Improving the planning of learning provision regionally to reduce duplication.
- Improving the match of skills provision to the needs of individual regions, and
- Achieving better links to schools and universities so that there are more coherent learner ‘pathways’ for students at the local level.

47. The major programme of change that we have led and funded in the college sector – mergers and regional funding – has been one of the most significant programmes of reform undertaken in the public sector in Scotland. Colleges are at the centre of their communities and the impact of these changes – in terms of new regional college structures, better planning of the learning curricula, and new buildings and facilities – is improving significantly the opportunities for these communities and helping to build their autonomy and resilience.

II. Public service organisations work together effectively to achieve outcomes.

48. Our Strategic Plan commits SFC to working in partnership with other public bodies and organisations to better align public funding, help address complex policy challenges, eliminate wasteful duplication, and maximise the impact of our funding. Within our organisation, we have joint staff appointments or services with the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Creative Scotland and NHS Education Scotland.

49. In terms of the delivery of our Strategic Plan outcomes and the priorities of Scottish Government, we work closely with a wide-range of other public bodies, including Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Creative Scotland, and SQA. For example, we share a joint Skills Committee with SDS and work closely with them in the development of Skills Investment Plans (SIPS) and Regional Skills Assessments (RSAs): SIPS and RSAs provide information on skills needs regionally and for key industry sectors,
and help inform the development of learning provision in colleges and universities.

50. Working in partnership with Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, we launched the Innovation Centre programme in 2012 to support transformational change in university - business collaboration. The Centres aim to enhance innovation and entrepreneurship across Scotland’s key economic sectors, create jobs and grow the economy.

51. We have committed, in principle, up to £120 million of core funding for the programme over an initial six year period. Each centre has the specialist knowledge to support businesses in the design and development of the technology to deliver new products, processes and services. To date, eight centres have been established:

- Centre for Sensors and Imaging Systems
- Construction Scotland Innovation Centre
- Digital Health and Care Institute
- Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre
- Oil and Gas Innovation Centre
- Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre
- Stratified Scotland Innovation Centre
- The Data Lab

III. Public service organisations prioritise prevention, reducing inequalities and promoting equality

52. Our Strategic Plan makes a commitment that SFC will “Help create a more equal society by widening access to learning communities that are under-represented and by promoting equality and diversity.” As well as using our Outcome Agreement approach to promote and secure access to college and university learning provision for people from the widest range of backgrounds, and particularly disadvantaged communities, we lead and support a range of initiatives that aim to reduce educational inequalities and improve attainment:

- **Schools for Higher-education Programme (SHEP)**: a regional collaboration between universities, colleges and schools to increase progression to higher education in both colleges and universities.
- **Access to High-Demand Professions (AHDP)**: a national programme that targets schools with low progression to higher education. It focuses on two projects: REACH (access to law, medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry) and ACES (access to creative arts and architecture).
- **Advanced Higher Hub**: a project launched in 2013 by Glasgow Caledonian University in partnership with Glasgow City Council and supported by SFC
funding, the Hub allows pupils from deprived areas of Glasgow to study Advanced Highers on the University campus.

- **Articulation Hubs**: we fund five regional hubs in Scotland to enable college students to use Higher National Certificates (HNCs) to progress into year 2 of a degree programme and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) to progress into year 3 of a degree programme.

- **Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)**: we provide support to mature learners through SWAP, which offers activity and access programmes to higher education.

53. In 2016-17, we have provided an additional 680 undergraduate places – supporting access to university for students from the most disadvantaged areas – and 1,118 additional places enabling college students with HN qualifications to progress to university with advanced standing.

54. We also promote equality in colleges and universities through:

- Our Outcome Agreement approach.
- Our funding of the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), College Development Network and the Higher Education Academy.
- A range of other initiatives; for example, we have recently published an ambitious plan to tackle gender imbalance at colleges and universities through our first Gender Action Plan.

**IV. All public services constantly seek to improve performance and reduce costs, and are open, transparent and accountable**

55. The introduction of an Outcome Agreement approach to the funding of further and higher education in 2012-13 has allowed us to work closely with institutions to improve performance at the institutional, regional, and national levels. We do this by setting ambitious national and institutional targets to support our Strategic Plan outcomes. The range of data and evidence that we collect – some of which we have summarised earlier in this written statement – provides evidence of continuing improvement in teaching and learning, research, and innovation.

56. We seek to be open, transparent and accountable by publishing a wide range of information and data, including:

- SFC Board and committee papers
- Individual Outcome Agreements and summaries
- Publications about different aspects of further and higher education
- Statistical publications and other information on the performance of further and higher education in Scotland.
57. In terms of our own operations, as we have already mentioned, we have introduced the Scottish Government’s 3-Step Improvement Framework for Public Services to help ensure that we are developing continuously our performance. We have also continued to reduce our operational costs: our operational budget has reduced by 21% over the period FY 2010-11 to 2016-17.

**How does SFC undertake long-term financial planning?**

58. We operate on a three-year Strategic Plan cycle, which provides a financial budgeting framework for delivering our strategic priorities. As part of the Spending Review process, we work closely with the Scottish Government and the representative bodies for colleges and universities – Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland – to understand the financial needs of the sectors, the resources required to deliver SFC and Scottish Government strategic priorities and, where required, to develop sustainable funding options.

59. We also undertake financial planning to cover long-term budget commitments. For example, we have to support four-year cohorts of students – the length of a Scottish honours degree – and multi-year projects, such as the Innovation Centres.

**How is SFC able to manage change effectively?**

60. Since its inception in 2005, SFC has a strong record of managing change effectively. Some of the changes have been externally driven – for example:

- The reclassification of incorporated colleges as public bodies from 2015 by the Office of National Statistics – this change has had major implications for the way in which colleges undertake budgeting and financial reporting.
- Managing changes to SFC’s budgets as a result of Spending Review priorities – particularly in a way that maintains financial sustainability and planning certainty in the college and university sectors.

61. Other changes have been led by SFC, with the aim of taking forward Scottish Government priorities or SFC strategic priorities, or of providing solutions to complex policy challenges. For example, one of the key policy challenges that we face is: how does a small country like Scotland maintain an internationally competitive research base in the face of increased competition overseas, particularly from China and other Asian countries which are investing heavily in skills and research?

62. Our solution was to develop the ‘research pooling’ initiative with the aim of establishing a critical mass of research excellence in key areas of research for Scotland. We provided a £130 million investment for 14 ‘research pools’ which have brought together researchers from different universities, and facilitated
the sharing of research facilities and infrastructure. The evidence suggests that the initiative has encouraged the recruitment of leading international researchers to Scotland and helped the country maintain its reputation and competitiveness.

63. Our ability to manage change effectively is largely because of:

- **Our expertise**: we have staff with significant experience, skills, knowledge and understanding of further and higher education, which we are able to draw upon to develop innovative policy solutions.
- **Our approach**: we seek to work collaboratively with colleges, universities and other partners and stakeholders, including them within our policy-making so that we are able to manage change in a consensual fashion that is more likely to achieve positive outcomes.
- **Our position**: our access to a huge range of data and information about further and higher education, and our oversight of colleges and universities puts us in a unique position and allows us to identify opportunities for positive change and make them happen.

64. Perhaps the most significant programme of change that we have led recently is the college merger programme, as a result of which the number of publicly-funded colleges in Scotland has reduced from 43 in August 2010 to 25 in 2016. This unprecedented number of mergers, and the subsequent changes across the sector, was delivered in a relatively short period of time and affected over 70% of the college sector (by volume of Credits in academic year 2014-15). We have worked closely with the colleges to monitor and evaluate the impact and success of the programme, and to ensure that merger implementation was progressing well, that strategic direction was clear, and that the appropriate governance and management arrangements were in place.

65. Overall, the implementation and outcome of the merger programme has been a success with benefits for learners and employers, and annual savings of around £52 million a year. Inevitably with such a major programme of public sector reform, some colleges are still addressing particular challenges, including financial and operational issues, and we are continuing to work closely with them.

**How is SFC contributing to the Scottish Government’s targets on climate change?**
**How is it encouraging and enabling Scottish society to use natural resources more efficiently, and how is it also encouraging colleges and universities?**

66. Our main way of influencing Scottish society is through the colleges and universities that we fund. We promote sustainability through the Outcome Agreement approach and through our strategic funding. In particular, we ask
colleges and universities to report on progress toward their carbon targets and to highlight key achievements in learning and research for sustainability.

67. We have commissioned reviews of the sector carbon footprints, and considered these reports with colleges and universities to help inform our capital funding decisions. We are currently developing a 10 year capital strategy which will identify the resource needs to support carbon reduction and college and university estates that are more energy efficient.

68. We also:

- Fund the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC), which supports all colleges and universities in Scotland to reduce their carbon footprint, and embed sustainability in their teaching and research and all aspects of institutional operations.
- Sponsor the UK Green Gown Awards, which recognise best practice in all aspects of sustainability. Scottish colleges and universities won three of the 14 categories in the 2015 awards.

69. In addition, we fund a variety of strategic projects aimed at supporting Scotland’s transition to a low carbon society, including:

- The Scottish Institute for Remanufacturing, which is supporting the development of the ‘circular’ economy. It is one of only six centres of excellence for remanufacturing globally, joining others in Germany, Singapore, New York, Beijing and South Korea.
- The Scottish Carbon Capture and Storage Research Group, which advocates and seeks opportunities for the large-scale demonstration of carbon capture and storage technologies.

70. In terms of our own operations, whilst our office and corporate operations do not generate a significant volume of carbon emissions, we maintain an active culture of resource efficiency and sustainability. We achieved the NUS Green Impact ‘Gold’ award in 2015, and our carbon footprint has reduced by over 50% since 2009.
### SFC Strategic Plan Outcomes

#### Strategic Plan Outcome: High-quality learning and teaching

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<th>Strategic Plan themes</th>
<th>Letter of Guidance strategic objectives</th>
<th>National Outcomes and Indicators in the National Performance Framework</th>
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</table>
| **Access to learning:** We will have contributed to a more equal society because learning is accessible and diverse; attracting, and providing more equal opportunities for people of all ages, and from all communities and backgrounds in Scotland | • Access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds, including implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on Widening Access.  
• Leading the college contribution to implementing the Developing the Young Workforce Strategy. | • We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society. (National Outcome)  
• Increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work. (NO)  
• Improve levels of educational attainment. (National Indicator) |
| **Success in learning:** We will have an outstanding system of learning where all students are progressing successfully and benefiting from a world-class learning experience, in the hands of expert teachers and lecturers, delivered in modern facilities | • Highly efficient and effective regional structures for colleges, including structures in multi-college regions. | • We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (NO)  
• Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. (NO)  
• Improve levels of educational attainment. (NI) |
Progression from learning: We will have a more successful economy and society, with well-prepared and skilled students progressing into jobs with the ability, ideas, and ambition to make a difference.

- Learning which prepares people well for the world of work and successful long-term careers, and which prioritises provision that meets known skills gaps in the economy, for example in STEM subjects, and in doing so supports our ambitions for economic growth.

- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (NO)
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. (NO)
- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe. (NO)
- Improve the skill profile of the population. (NI)
- Increase the proportion of graduates in positive destinations. (NI)

Strategic Plan Outcome: World-leading research

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<td>Research competitiveness: Scotland will be a country of discovery where talented researchers from across the world come together to explore, challenge, and address some of the most fundamental questions facing our society. And our</td>
<td>Internationally competitive and impactful research</td>
<td>We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (NO)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve Scotland’s reputation. (NI)</td>
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<td>Increase research and development spending. (NI)</td>
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universities will have a world-leading reputation for the impact of their research; from addressing our future energy needs to revolutionising medicine and our healthcare

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<th>Research training: Scotland will be nurturing, developing and training the international research leaders and Nobel Laureates of tomorrow</th>
<th>Internationally competitive and impactful research</th>
<th>We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (NO)</th>
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<tr>
<td>International connections: Our universities will continue to have world-class facilities, a global reputation and standing, and international connections and collaborations</td>
<td>Internationally competitive and impactful research</td>
<td>We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (NO)</td>
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<td>Improve Scotland’s reputation. (NI)</td>
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### Strategic Plan Outcome: Greater innovation in the economy

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<tr>
<td>National strategy and practice: We will have a successful national strategy for innovation which attracts interest and</td>
<td>Effective knowledge exchange and innovation including excellent university/industry collaboration.</td>
<td>We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (NO)</td>
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admiration from across the world. We will have a stronger, more productive and resilient economy with economic growth supported by innovation from our colleges and universities

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<th>Strategic investment: Our strategic investment will have helped to develop a nation with a deep culture of collaboration between colleges, universities, business and venture capital, and improved commercialisation of research. More businesses in Scotland will use innovation to improve their competitiveness, productivity and growth. Improvements in our culture, health, well-being and public services will be supported by a two way flow of new ideas and innovation between colleges, universities and public services.</th>
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<td><strong>• Effective knowledge exchange and innovation including excellent university/industry collaboration.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe. (NO)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Increase the number of businesses. (NI)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Improve Scotland’s reputation. (NI)</strong></td>
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<th>Enterprise and creativity: Scotland’s entrepreneurial students and research leaders will be generating some of the most innovative new businesses in the world.</th>
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<td><strong>• Effective knowledge exchange and innovation including excellent university/industry collaboration.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (NO)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe. (NO)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Improve knowledge exchange from university research. (NI)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>International: The excellence of the university research base will be attracting investment and job creation from many of the world’s most dynamic, growing international businesses.</td>
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