



ABOUT THE SCHEME

What is the Innovation Voucher Student Placement Scheme?

The scheme is aimed at building on existing relationships between SMEs and HEIs in Scotland to continue the development of an SFC standard Innovation Voucher award. A PhD/Masters student will be placed within the company to continue this development and work on a clearly defined project/timeframe with the intention that the outputs of the project can be adopted by the business and offer valuable business skills/experience to the student.

Key Principles

- Only SMEs that have had a successful SFC standard innovation voucher award are eligible to apply.*
- The voucher should be used to continue the development programme from the original Innovation Voucher project.
- The company should identify a clearly defined issue or opportunity that will benefit from PhD/Masters student interaction within their business to set timescales.
- The onus is on the company/academic supervisor to have a student in place prior to submission of the application.
- The student and academic supervisor will be from the same institution as the standard Innovation Voucher project to allow continuity.
- The project should provide an opportunity for learning outcomes for the student that will enhance their business skills and employability.
- Eligible SMEs can only be awarded one voucher.
- The scheme cannot be used to finance time/expertise that could be delivered commercially.

** Please note that Sole Traders and Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) will not be eligible for this grant.*

TIMESCALES

- The student placement can be up three months long where the student is usually based within the host company.
- They can be run any time throughout the year but consideration should be given to busiest periods in academic year when students may be unavailable.
- The project can be delivered over a series of short blocks e.g. 1-2 days per week over a defined period or as a single block e.g. 4-6 weeks full time.

APPROPRIATE WORK/TASKS FOR STUDENT

- Work that offers a genuine “something extra” that has a medium to long term benefit rather than simply a short term “extra pair of hands”.
- Project which gives the student ownership/responsibility for some aspects of their work, and has the opportunity to present it or explain it to others.
- Ideally work with a range of people, providing the opportunity to network and build relationships with a range of people at multiple levels within the business/customers.
- Chance to use written/verbal communication skills in a business, rather than academic context.
- Chance to see how their role fits in to the wider context and learn about business culture.
- Shadowing at a more strategic level.
- Ultimately the placement should benefit the student by enhancing their business skills and experience as well as the SME by helping to further develop their new product, service or process.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

What is the Value of the award?

The award (for an individual project) is for up to £5000, with a minimum of £1000, and will be paid upon submission of a simple final report proforma which should be submitted by the academic institute to applications@interface-online.org.uk.

The application form should clearly set out the exact costs of the activity (e.g. student time, travel, etc.). SFC would not expect the HEIs to conduct this activity at a loss and they should set out day rates for PhD/Masters students accordingly.

NI costs should also be included as per HEI procedures and SFC will reimburse for all costs.

Full economic costing (FEC) will inform this process. Equally, SFC would expect HEIs to justify the costs and will look at the proposal with an appropriateness and value for money test.

It is expected that the company would provide a defined in-kind contribution to cover the placement. This may largely be hosted within the business premises and providing a work space and equipment necessary for the tasks required.

De Minimus Aid

The value of this award is considered as De Minimus.

Further information on De Minimus Aid can be found [here](#):

Eligible Costs:

- Student time/resources on the project.
- A travel allowance for the student (we would expect placements to be as local as possible and will consider value for money should travel expenses be too high).
- Monitoring of placement by academic supervisor.
- Accommodation costs – given the value of the grant, we would expect this to be relatively low and the SME may be asked to cover these
- Consumables / equipment will be eligible and reviewed on a case by case basis

Are the awards subject to VAT?

VAT which is recoverable, by whatever means, is ineligible, even if it is not actually recovered by the final beneficiary or individual recipient. Irrecoverable VAT can be claimed as an eligible cost provided the claim is substantiated by appropriate evidence from the organisation's auditors or accountants. It is at the discretion of the individual HEI and their internal procedures that the proposed scheme of activity is classified research or consultancy.

HOW WILL PROJECTS BE AWARDED?

The project team (company and academic) should consider whether a student placement could help them further as they are compiling the Final Report of their SFC Standard Innovation Voucher. They should contact Interface to discuss further options if this scheme is suitable and the proposed costs are eligible. On agreement, they should work together to write up a short proposal based on costs and named student.

The information on the chosen project must be forwarded by the HEI commercialisation contact to colleagues at Interface: applications@interface-online.org.uk **A decision on the award will be communicated by the Scottish Funding Council within 3 weeks.**

The Scottish Funding Council **reserves the right to turn down any application** should it be deemed not to match the published criteria or overall purposes of the scheme. SFC may in some cases ask applicants for further information to clarify applications.

Intellectual Property

It is anticipated that any IP generated from this placement would be fully exploitable by the company and agreements should be put in place prior to submission of a full application.

The following information should be included within the application:

- Any background IP which the company and academic partner will bring to the project.
- Any agreements in place with respect to the foreground IP that may be developed during the project (company, academic and student).

FINAL REPORT AND PROJECT COMPLETION

It is anticipated that the company and HEI team (student and academic supervisor) will hold a final close out meeting to review the learning outcomes achieved from the placement, this should be confirmed in the short final report proforma, a copy of which is included in the application form.

This report should be signed off by the academic supervisor, student and SME to confirm time spent on the project and highlight the achieved outcomes.

All final reports must be submitted to Interface using the address applications@interface-online.org.uk

Further information on the Joined up Government and Freedom of Information can be found [here](#):