



Scottish Funding Council

Promoting further and higher education

Dear Ms McAlpine,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your Committee's recommendation contained within *Putting Artists In The Picture: A Sustainable Arts Funding System For Scotland*. As the Committee duly notes, the Scottish Funding Council's interventions take forward the priorities identified in our Ministerial Letter of Guidance, which states that, "one of the most significant social interventions our colleges and universities can make is preparing people for work..."

SFC welcomes the Committee's recommendation that we, in conjunction with our partners, continue to ensure that the outcome agreements negotiated with the colleges and universities that we fund, with regard to employability and career support are being applied to programmes also relevant to the arts. In SFC's current Outcome Agreement Guidance¹ (which will be refreshed in Summer 2020), we outline our expectation that all students in our universities and colleges have a high-quality learning experience, are supported to succeed in their studies and equipped to flourish in employment, further study and to lead fulfilling lives, including equipping them with the relevant entrepreneurial skills appropriate to their respective career pathway.

Our OA Guidance also asks institutions to evidence how their provision responds to employment and skills needs of students, employers and the economy, particularly with respect to Digital and the Creative Arts. In the case of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) this includes close partnerships with all of Scotland's national performing companies, enabling students to learn in a proto-professional environment alongside professional practitioners, and sharing specialist industry standard equipment and facilities throughout their UG programmes. A key outcome, which SFC expects of universities and colleges is for SFC is to ensure, "High quality learning in a learning system which is seamlessly connected for the learner, including learning which prepares people well for the world of work, prioritising provision that meets known skill gaps in the economy".

We believe there is encouraging progress in this area already, though we recognise that we can focus our efforts further to ensure that employability and career support are available in programmes relevant to the arts. Examples of existing good practice in this area include Glasgow School of Art's (GSA) Enterprise Studio: Summer School, a three week, intensive pre-incubation programme delivered to students and recent

¹ <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications-statistics/guidance/2019/SFCGD212019.aspx>

graduates using the MODUAL: Kickstarter programme specifically designed for the development of entrepreneurial skills and behaviours for artists and creative industries students attending GSA and the RCS.

A further collaboration between Queen Margaret University, GSA and RCS is the SHIFT annual enterprise summer school focused on the specific needs of students and graduates in creative arts subjects as they embark on their professional careers. In the first year of delivery of the pilot, some 60 places were allocated to the students of the three founding partner institutions.

In this context, SFC noted with interest the Committee's comments on the use of data to support evidence-based policy making, and we would very much welcome the opportunity to collaborate further in this area. SFC would also like to reiterate our commitment to continually reviewing and updating the outcome agreement process to ensure it reflects and supports the individual strengths of institutions, particularly in the vital area of preparing students for employment.