

# Student Placement Innovation Voucher Supporting Information

This guide is designed to give an overview of the Student Placement Innovation Voucher scheme. We recommend that you read through this document before completing the application form.



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## Interface's Role in the Scheme

- Interface will be responsible for reviewing and assessing all Innovation Voucher applications via the [Interface Partner Portal](#).
- Interface will issue all approval / rejection emails.
- Interface, via Edinburgh Innovations, will process payment of Innovation Vouchers.
- All funding correspondence should be sent to Interface via [applications@interface-online.org.uk](mailto:applications@interface-online.org.uk)

[Apply here](#)

## Student Placement Innovation Voucher

- The Student Placement Innovation Vouchers are an opportunity to build on existing relationships between SMEs and Scottish Universities to continue the development of a Standard Innovation Voucher award
- The project should amplify and build on the success of the previous Innovation Voucher project. The Standard IV Final Report must be submitted before an application for a Student Project can be made
- Projects should be led by the same company and academic team, offering valuable business skills and experience to the PhD or Masters Student
- Companies must have suitable premises to host the student
- Grants between £1,000 and £7,500 available which covers the academic project costs.
- Companies must contribute a matching in kind value

## Need to Know



The value of the voucher for an individual project is up to £7,500 to cover the student's expenses and eligible project costs and will be paid to the university.



The company must contribute an equal value in cash, in kind (such as staff time, materials or equipment), or a combination of both.



All SMEs are eligible to apply (fewer than 250 employees and turnover of less than £50 million)



Eligible companies can only be awarded one Student Placement Innovation Voucher.

- ✓ The company must have the capability to host a PhD or Masters student within their company premises for some of the project.
- ✓ The student will be employed by the university; therefore, appropriate employability/eligibility checks should be made in advance.

- ✓ The onus is on the company and academic supervisor to have a student in place prior to submission of the application.
- ✓ The project should provide an opportunity for learning outcomes for the student that will enhance their business skills and employability, whilst helping the business with the development of a new product, service or process.

## Eligible costs include

- ✓ Student time/resources on the project.
- ✓ Monitoring of placement by academic supervisor (this is expected to be a small percentage of the overall project time).
- ✓ Accommodation costs, if based beyond reasonable daily travel distance – given the value of the grant, we would expect this to be relatively low and the SME may be asked to cover these.
- ✓ 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).
- ✓ Consumables / equipment may be eligible and reviewed on a case-by-case basis, however this must be in relation to the project and for the purpose of the student gaining experience. The host company would be expected to supply necessary equipment such as a computer, telephone etc.

### Cannot be Funded:

- ✗ Consultancy e.g. to study/evaluate current products, systems and practices.
- ✗ Company and strategy planning.
- ✗ Data gathering and literature reviews.
- ✗ Marketing activities such as development of mobile apps or literature for advertising.
- ✗ Skills development, continuous professional development and training courses.
- ✗ Activities that would promote/subsidise the cost of exports.
- ✗ Software purchases.

## What work/tasks are suitable for a student?

- ✔ Work that offers a genuine “something extra” that has a medium to long term benefit to the company, 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, both internally and externally, for the company.
- ✔ Opportunity to use written/verbal communication skills in a business, rather than academic context.
- ✔ Opportunity to see how their role fits in to the wider context of a company and learn about business culture.
- ✔ Shadowing at a more strategic level.

## Additional Supporting Information

### Is VAT an Eligible Expense?

The Scottish Funding Council have advised in order to maximise use of public funding and support as many companies as possible through the Innovation Voucher programme, any VAT costs incurred as a result of the project are not eligible for inclusion in the grant claim within the Innovation Voucher application”.



### Are Student Placement Innovation Vouchers considered a subsidy?

The Grant is awarded as a Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act (2022). There is a threshold of £315,000 MFA cumulated over this and the previous two financial years, as specified in section 36(1) of the Subsidy Control Act (2022) and the grantee must ensure that this is not exceeded. The grantee is required to keep a written record of the amount of MFA received and the date/s when it was received. This will enable the grantee to respond to future requests from public authorities on how much MFA has been received and whether the cumulative threshold has been reached. (The Grantee may need to keep this Agreement for longer than three years for other purposes).

### **How long will my project take?**

The student placement project will normally take up to three months where the student is based within the host company. However, it 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.

Projects can run any time throughout the year but consideration should be given to busiest periods in an academic year when students may be unavailable.

### **Can changes be made to the project scope or timescales?**

Once an award has been approved by Interface, the university should contact the company as soon as possible and commence the project as planned. If, for any reason, the project timescales cannot be met or the project objectives change, the university must complete a [change request form](#) as soon as possible and send it to [applications@interface-online.org.uk](mailto:applications@interface-online.org.uk) for approval. Once the grant is approved, no changes to the overall project costs are expected. If you do not notify Interface of any delays, the offer of grant may be withdrawn.

### **What happens if a problem arises during the project?**

There may be times when a problem or issue arises. We recommended that you initially raise any concerns with the commercial contact in the university as soon as possible.

If, however, you are still dissatisfied, please contact [applications@interface-online.org.uk](mailto:applications@interface-online.org.uk) giving a brief outline of the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If any issues arise with your chosen university partner, as above, you should discuss this with the commercial contact within the university. If this requires further action, each university has a complaints process that should be followed – this can be found on the university website.

### **How will the ownership of the intellectual assets be agreed?**

Before any application is submitted, the company and university must agree on the ownership of intellectual assets and intellectual property – both existing (background IP) and what will be produced as a result of the project (foreground IP), as well as confidentiality and data sharing.

Standard [legal templates](#) for the Innovation Voucher scheme which clearly outline how the new IP can be commercialised by the company have been agreed by all Scottish universities. The IP clauses set out in these legal templates are a non-negotiable condition of applying for an Innovation Voucher.

Further information about intellectual property can be found [here](#) and on the government website: <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/blogs/iptutor/>

For information and advice on Intellectual Property Post Brexit please consult this link: [Intellectual property after 1 January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **What happens once the project is completed?**

The company, student and supervising academic should hold a meeting at the end of the project to review the findings and recommendations from the project.

This meeting should review the work undertaken, consider the next steps and compile the information for the final report. The final report can be submitted via the [Interface Partner Portal](#).

Further funding support following a successful Student Placement Innovation Voucher project can be sought to develop projects. More information can be obtained [here](#).

More information about IP can be found [here](#) or from the [Intellectual Property Office \(IPO\)](#).

### **How is the grant paid?**

The grant is paid directly to the university or college (or, where applicable, the regional strategic body to which the college is assigned). Quarterly payments will be made to each university, based on approved final reports submitted up to the cut-off point.

A statement of grants to be defrayed, based on the approved final reports submitted, will be provided to the university and the university will then be requested to submit an invoice for the total amount.

Payments will be made by Edinburgh Innovations Ltd on behalf of Interface and this will be reflected on your statements. A remittance advice note will be provided.

If for any reason the project is terminated before it is completed, a claim can still be made if the costs exceed £1,000 and the company has matched the contribution in kind/cash.

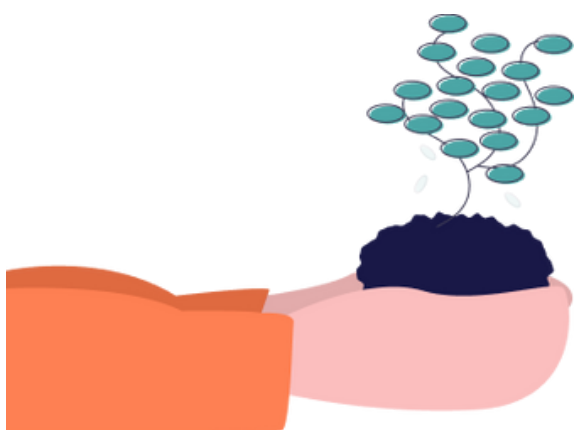
If the claim is less than £1,000 the company may be asked to pay this directly to the university in accordance with the Legal Agreement.

### Will the outcome from the project be promoted?

All projects are followed up by Interface six months after completion with a survey, so we may evaluate the impact and outcomes of the scheme. The relevant company will be required to complete this survey (as per agreed terms detailed in Section A1.6 of the Application Form).

In addition, Interface occasionally includes case studies of successful projects funded by vouchers to promote the scheme on its website and other media. These can be extremely useful for promoting your company, but you can let us know if you do not want a case study produced.

## Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Environmental Sustainability



Partners, Interface and universities and colleges are committed to promoting [equality](#), diversity and [environmental sustainability](#) (also known as Responsible Business).

Further details about the Scottish Funding Council's equality, diversity and environmental sustainability policies can be found [here](#).

As vouchers are an award of public funds, there is a duty to ensure that these funds are reaching the widest possible pool of recipients. As such, there is an obligation to complete a survey 6 months post project completion. This will allow for evidence to be gathered and recommendations made to ensure these policies are being met. This survey will be sent separately.

We would also encourage all companies to promote the [Scottish Company Pledge](#), a partnership between the Scottish Government and companies to commit to shared ambitions of fairness, equality, diversity and sustainable economic growth through progressive policies.

## Freedom of Information


The Scottish Funding Council may share information about projects with the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other appropriate organisations in the interests of developing and promoting the Innovation Voucher Scheme.


The Scottish Funding Council is subject to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and may be requested to disclose information about the Standard Innovation Voucher Scheme. Companies, universities or colleges will be consulted before any decision to disclose information is taken. However, refusal to disclose information may be appealed to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

## Privacy Statement


Interface will share personal data collected for facilitating the application for Innovation Vouchers with the Scottish Funding Council, for more information; please see the respective privacy statements: [Interface](#), [SFC](#).

 [Useful Links](#)

 [Pre-submission Form](#)

 [Interface Partner Portal](#)

 [Change Request Form](#)

 [Legal Agreements](#)

 [Email](#)