

# Standard Innovation Voucher Supporting Information

This guide is designed to give an overview of the Standard 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](#)

## Standard Innovation Voucher (IV)

### Standard Innovation Voucher

- Encourage new first-time collaboration between a company and a [university or college](#).
- Support innovation to develop a new product, process or service for the company.
- Vouchers are available to SMEs, sole traders, social enterprises/third sector organisations. [You may need to complete a pre-submission form to confirm eligibility](#).
- Applications from all sectors welcome.
- Main business operations must take place in Scotland.
- Grants between £1,000 and £7,500 available which covers the academic project costs.
- Companies must contribute a matching in kind value.

### Workforce Innovation Voucher

- Encourage new first-time partnerships between a company and a college or university.
- Supports innovation to develop the company's workforce (New/Enhanced Workplace Business Processes/Innovation Workplace Practices/Innovative Business Expertise).

## Need to Know

- ✓ All SMEs are eligible to apply (fewer than 250 employees and turnover of less than £50 million)
- ✓ Companies must be based in Scotland. If based elsewhere with business operations in Scotland, you may be eligible, but must complete a pre-submission form to confirm this prior to applying.  
  
If you are a sole trader, social enterprise or third sector organisation that's not registered in Scotland (does not have a registration number starting with SC), please complete a pre-submission form to confirm eligibility.
- ✓ If a partnership between the company and the academic partner already exists this scheme would not be suitable
- ✓ The company must contribute an equal value in cash, in kind (such as staff time, materials or equipment), or a combination of both
- ✓ Projects must be innovative
- ✓ Managing Directors/company employees with multiple companies cannot apply to the scheme more than once
- ✓ SMEs that have been awarded a Standard IV to work with a University, are eligible to apply for a workforce Innovation Voucher with a College
- ✓ Research Institutes and Innovation Centres are not eligible for either form of Innovation Voucher funding
- ✓ Grants are paid directly to universities or colleges, please discuss academic day rates with your chosen university or college.
- ✓ Companies can pool Vouchers – please contact the applications team for more info
- ✓ Projects must benefit the company, the academic institution and the Scottish economy
- ✓ VAT costs incurred as a result of the project are not eligible for inclusion in the grant claim within the Innovation Voucher application
- ✓ Projects must require academic expertise and cannot be delivered commercially
- ✓ To confirm eligibility of your business or potential projects, please email [applications@interface-online.org.uk](mailto:applications@interface-online.org.uk)

### 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
- ✗ Internships (or employment of interns)
- ✗ Recipe development / changes to existing recipes nor establishing nutritional value of existing products

## Additional Supporting Information

### What is the policy on purchasing equipment?

The scheme exists to pay for academic time to work on the development of innovative new products/services/processes or innovative workforce development. It can only reimburse colleges or universities for costs incurred due to this project, based on the already extensive resource base within Scotland's universities and colleges. While small consumable budgets can be applied for, the scheme cannot be used to purchase equipment or anything that can be used by either partner following completion of a project. If the execution of the project requires the purchase of any equipment - Only the depreciation costs of equipment used during project would be eligible for inclusion, rather the cost of equipment that would then belong to university/college beyond the project.



### Are 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).

### 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 or college as soon as possible.

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

If any issues arise with your chosen partner, as above, you should discuss this with the commercial contact within the university or college. If this requires further escalation,

each university or college has a formal complaints process that should be followed – this can be found on the relevant university or college website.

### **Should I expect a finished product as a deliverable?**

No. A finished commercial product should not be expected as a deliverable. The Innovation Voucher covers up to £7,500 worth of work. The deliverables will be agreed at the outset.

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

Developing new ideas and partnerships creates Intellectual Property (IP) and other intellectual or intangible assets. Intellectual property is something unique that you physically create - an idea alone is not intellectual property. For example, an idea for a book is not an intellectual asset, but the words you've written are. Copyright, patents, designs and trademarks are all types of intellectual property protection.

Before any application is submitted, the company and university or college 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.

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

### **If the Academic Partner has a research licence to the foreground IP can they exploit this with a competitor of the company?**

No. It is important to make sure both parties appreciate the difference between a commercial licence and a research licence to avoid complications. The IP agreement will provide free access to IP for research and teaching purposes for the academic team under conditions which do not in any way compromise commercial application by the company.

The key point is that the clause only applies where the company owns the IP, and the university or college is granted back a research licence. So the university or college never has a licence to “exploit” the IP with third parties, but merely to use the IP in collaborations with third parties for research purposes. This is aimed at academic third

parties, but leaves it open for research collaboration with commercial third parties. However commercial third parties could never exploit this IP.

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.

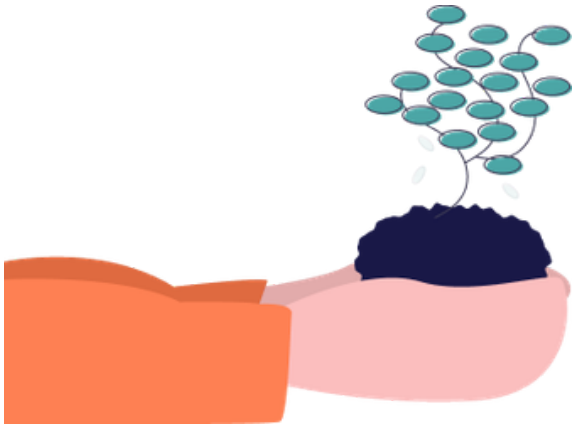
If the claim is less than £1,000 the company may be asked to pay this directly to the university or college in accordance with the Legal Agreement thus allowing the company to apply for an Innovation Voucher (either type) with a different academic partner.

### **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.

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



Interface is committed to our [responsible business](#) aims, which underpin all our activity. Achieving Net Zero. Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Delivering Social Value.

Further details about the Scottish Funding Council's critical themes and commitments 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.

## 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](#)**



**[Email](#)**



**[Legal Agreements](#)**