



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

**FRESH TALENT
CHALLENGE FUND
(INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS)
2008/09**

Information Note

Background

The Fresh Talent initiative was established in response to demographic projections showing Scotland's population is ageing and projected to decline. The key objective is to attract and retain bright, motivated and hard-working people to live, work and study in Scotland to support economic growth.

International students have been identified as a key target audience under the Fresh Talent initiative, and a number of strands of activity have been taken forward to encourage students to choose Scotland as a place to study, and to encourage them to stay on in the country at the end of their studies. These include the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme (FT:WiSS) which allows eligible international graduates from Scottish education institutions to live and work in Scotland for up to 2 years after graduation without requiring a work permit. From Spring 2008, when the new Points Based System for Managed Migration is introduced, the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme will become part of the new Tier One - Post Study category.

Since the launch of FT:WiSS, over 6,000 international graduates have been successful in applying to stay in Scotland and this number continues to grow. While most graduates on the scheme are successful in finding employment we have received feedback that some graduates find it difficult to gain employment appropriate to their qualifications and experience. Therefore this year the Fresh Talent: Supporting International Students Challenge Fund is intended to provide help to kick-start more **employability activities** aimed at international students.

This is the fourth round of Fresh Talent: Supporting International Students Challenge Funding and information and case studies of projects funded in previous rounds can be found on www.scotlandistheplace.com/challengefund.

Aims

The Fresh Talent Challenge Fund (International Students) is a competitive fund, open to further and higher education institutions. The aims for 2008/09 are:

- to enhance **employability support** and mentoring available to international students in Scotland;
- to encourage institutions to work collaboratively, both within and outwith the sector, to develop innovative and effective ways of supporting international students to **access the Scottish jobs market**.

Who is eligible?

The Fresh Talent: Supporting International Students Challenge Fund is open to all higher and further education institutions in Scotland which are active in international student recruitment. Applications can be submitted by individual institutions or by an institution which is working with other institutions and/or with local partners on a proposal. This includes;

- Student organisations
- Local Enterprise Companies
- Local authorities
- Voluntary organisations
- Employers/businesses

(Please note that, where collaborative projects are being proposed, applications must be submitted by the lead further or higher education institution.)

Funding

Up to £200,000 is being made available for the Fund in the academic year 2008/09 (year ending 30 September 2009). Although the funding available to each project will be assessed on a case by case basis, it is expected that bids from individual institutions will attract funding of up to £30,000 although wide-ranging bids from 2 or more institutions or partners may receive a higher level of funding (up to £60,000).

It is expected that the Fund will kick-start activity which will be funded by the institution and other partners in subsequent years. As a result, it is expected that applications will be submitted for a single academic session. Projects/activities already in receipt of Year 1 support from the Challenge Fund in 2007/08 can apply for a reduced level of Year 2 funding to help them in becoming sustainable in the longer term.. However, Year 2 applications will not be given priority, and will be considered alongside applications for new projects/activities. Projects which have received funding for 2 years will not be considered for further funding.

What can the funding be used for?

The purpose of the Fund is to support activities which aim to help international students access information and advice to help them access the Scottish jobs market. Most institutions already hold welcome events for new overseas students, and this Fund is not intended to support these existing activities. Rather, the Fund will support events and activities which are organised for students during, and towards the end of, their studies. Some examples of the kinds of activities which might be funded are:

- Seminars, mentoring or work shadowing schemes which allow international students to meet local employers and agencies, and generally find out about the opportunities open to them during or following completion of their studies.
- Events / guidance to help international students develop their employability / interpersonal skills.

Projects which include a high proportion of **social activity** (eg ceilidhs, visits to tourist attractions) will **not** be funded.

Staff costs will not normally be funded, unless these can be demonstrated to be additional to current activity and necessary for the operation of the activities (e.g. a co-ordinator for an activity being organised on a collaborative basis may be an eligible cost; costs of staff already employed by one of the institutions will not be eligible, as these could be seen as a partner contribution).

Please note: projects which involve information events for students should not assume the availability of Scottish Government staff to participate in such events, although material on the Fresh Talent initiative and the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme / Tier One Post-Study can be provided.

As indicated above, particular weighting will be given to proposals developed on a partnership basis between 2 or more institutions and/or local partners, and to proposals which will deliver activities on a geographical, rather than an individual institution, basis. However, institutions in areas where such joint working is more difficult will not be penalised. Proposals which involve financial and in-kind contributions from other partners will also receive greater weighting.

Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to report on their projects at the end of the funding period. Guidance on the content of the report will be sent to successful applicants with the funding agreement.

Timing

The closing date for applications to the Challenge Fund is **Friday 2 May 2008**. Applications will be assessed by an advisory group, before recommendations are made to Ministers. An announcement of successful bids will be made by July 2008 to enable projects to commence close to the beginning of the 2008/09 academic session.

Scottish Government
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