

Four things I would highlight that the SFC can support to enable a more sustainable HE and FE landscape making a greater contribution to a thriving low carbon future economy in Scotland:

1. **AN AGILE AND RESPONSIVE SKILLS SYSTEM:** The skills system does not typically respond very quickly, as both SFC and Skills Development Scotland tend to invest in long term skills development and in programmes which take some time to deliver a change in the workforce. Both the response to COVID and the Climate Emergency need a faster skills transition, particularly for those sector workforces who are most affected. The SFC should seek opportunities to fund shorter and more flexible skills provision, which is still quality assured and builds towards recognised qualifications. This might include, for example, a mini-Masters programme.
2. **MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE KNOWLEDGE AND CARBON LITERACY:** In developing the commission's recommendations around skills, having considered an Edinburgh Low Carbon Skills Academy (a partnership bringing together expertise, assets and resources from both universities and colleges), we ultimately agreed that there would be more impact from mainstreaming of climate knowledge into the curriculum across all education programmes. The SFC potentially has the ability to mandate and support that across all HE and FE education provision, in a similar way as programmes such as employability were mainstreamed, but with more urgency.
3. **IDENTIFYING FUTURE LOW CARBON INDUSTRIES:** COVID has starkly highlighted which industries look set to be most economically and environmentally sustainable in a future economy. To create the best and most sustainable opportunities for people in Scotland, the SFC should work with its partners to identify and focus on supporting skills development in those industries that are likely to emerge and thrive in a low carbon future, and in which jobs are less liable to offshoring.
4. **CONDITIONAL INVESTMENT:** An emerging theme in all green recovery recommendations is that all public funding, support and investment should be conditional on organisations demonstrating and delivering clear climate commitments. In particular, capital support should be conditional on the future carbon footprint of buildings or projects, with projects being allocated a carbon budget.