



## Connecting businesses to Scotland's world-leading academic expertise

Based regionally throughout Scotland, Interface works with businesses of all sizes, in all sectors, matching them to the world-leading academic expertise within Scotland to support industry led research and development.

### Engaging with industry can help lecturers and staff to:

- impact the economy through application of research
- grow industrial contacts and networks relevant to research themes
- provide additional income to fund staff and departments
- support student engagement with industry via work based learning and sponsored students to provide new ideas, skills and enhance employability
- create commercial opportunities from specialist facilities
- establish new avenues for applied research
- research and solve real world industry challenges
- build relationships with other universities and disciplines

### How we can help you?

*Seeking new industry collaborators?  
Wish to apply novel research in an industry setting?  
Don't know what businesses are looking for?*

### ***This is where the Interface team can help!***

Interface **promotes academic expertise** as a valuable resource for research and development to businesses. Every day the Interface team engages with businesses and industry leaders across the country to understand their individual business and wider sector challenges and through an established process **with all Scotland's universities, research institutes and colleges** will identify appropriate expertise, technologies and specialist facilities **to help solve these challenges**. By working together to accelerate entrepreneurship and innovation Interface can drive sustainable economic growth and help make Scotland a CAN DO place for business.



### Interface in numbers

Business supported by Interface contribute **£64.2 million** gross value added (GVA) a year for the Scottish economy, supporting around **1,060 Scottish jobs**. Since 2005, Interface has introduced **over 3,100 businesses** to academic partners and its success story is reflected in the following:

- Over **2,250** company and academic collaborative projects initiated
- **33** multiparty group projects addressing key growth sector challenges
- **71%** of businesses were partnered with academic disciplines outside of their industry sector
- **83%** of businesses recorded reduced operating costs, increased productivity, profits, export, turnover and new or safeguarded employment
- **92%** of expertise searches identified
- **97%** of businesses said that their project would either not have happened or taken longer without support from Interface

# Innovation Vouchers

The Scottish Funding Council offer a number of funding programmes, which are administered by Interface, to offset the cost for businesses collaborating with Scotland's further education colleges to develop new products, services and processes through R&D projects. All Scottish Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are eligible for these funding streams.

## Scheme at a glance

- Standard Innovation Vouchers encourage **new first-time partnerships** between a company and further education colleges.
- The value of a Standard Innovation Voucher is **between £1,000 and £5,000**, which covers the academic project costs and is paid directly to the college.
- The company contributes an **equal value** in cash or in kind (such as staff time, materials or equipment) or a combination of both.
- **All SMEs** (from traders up to 250 employees max) social enterprises and third sector organisations with main company operations in Scotland can apply for a voucher if they are partnering with a Scottish Further Education College.
- Businesses are eligible to apply for **one** Standard Innovation Voucher and Follow On Innovation Vouchers are available to continue the relationship.
- Projects must be **innovative** (a novel/pioneering idea) and lead to **new products, services or processes** that will **benefit** the company, the college **and** the Scottish economy.
- Businesses can also **apply together** to pool their vouchers to solve a common issue. The Scottish Funding Council have set a maximum limit of **four** companies per pooled Standard Innovation Voucher application.



## James Frew

James Frew was awarded a Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Innovation Voucher to collaborate with West College Scotland to develop a new innovative training planning process, including the monitoring of certification renewals, development of individual training plans and the measurement of the impact of training through AMI (Achievement Measurement Indexing).

***“The SFC Innovation Voucher has allowed James Frew and WCS to positively collaborate to implement business improvements and develop more meaningful relationships that are mutually beneficial. In doing so, our staff at the college have been able to use this knowledge to work with other organisations to help them improve and enhance the products and services that they offer.”***

Andrew Fogarty, Head of Energy and Engineering,  
West College Scotland



Engineering & Technology



## QBM

QBM collaborated with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), funded by a Scottish Funding Council Innovation Voucher, to commission a report to cover the environmental, financial, and practical elements involved in growing hydroponic grass in Scotland and the wider UK to support the desire of horse owners to grow high quality feed at an affordable and sustainable level.

***“We found the Scottish Funding Council’s Innovation Voucher programme very straightforward for carrying out an early stage study into a novel concept. The programme provides an extremely useful means of getting initial ideas off the ground. It was a pleasure working with Alan and John of QBM and hopefully there may be some further opportunities to collaborate in the future.”***

David Lawson, SRUC



Food & Drink

## Connect with Interface

T: 0845 013 0536 E: [info@interface-online.org.uk](mailto:info@interface-online.org.uk) W: [www.interface-online.org.uk](http://www.interface-online.org.uk) @InterfaceOnline

