

Application deadline: 1700 Friday 28th January 2022

1. Introduction

The Scottish Funding Council has awarded the administration of the SFC Saltire scheme for collaborative European exchanges in chemistry research to ScotCHEM (ScotCHEM European Exchanges).

The Scheme will run in the Academic Year (AY) 2021-22.

ScotCHEM is inviting applications for European research exchanges of up to six months for doctoral research students and early career researchers under this scheme (see eligibility criteria below).

2. Scope

ScotCHEM European Exchanges will be open to both outgoing exchanges and incoming exchanges for Post-graduate Researchers (PGRs) and Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

The programme will focus on chemistry/chemical sciences or cross disciplinary research through collaboration. There will be a particular emphasis on existing or emerging strengths within exchange universities, and applicants will be expected to align their proposals with Horizon Europe priorities such as pillars, missions and/or partnerships.

Exchanges are expected to take place between research institutions in Scotland and EU Member States, EEA and EFTA countries. There is also scope to have exchanges with companies based in EU Member States, EEA and EFTA countries provided these placements will demonstrably maintain and strengthen Scottish universities' research ties with European collaborators.

PGRs and ECRs from ScotCHEM member universities will be eligible to apply¹.

PGRs and ECRs from any University or research institution in EU Member States, EEA and EFTA countries will be eligible for the programme, if the applicant meets the application and eligibility criteria set out below including facilitating exchange of researchers in the chemical sciences with at least one ScotCHEM university partner.

Inbound exchange placements must be based at a ScotCHEM member department and through which applications must be made.

Inbound or outbound exchanges can be three- or six-months duration (Table 1).

ScotCHEM will support ScotCHEM European Exchange awardees through a peer alumni group including on-line and in-person (restrictions allowing) events for shared learning and networking, and a "graduation" ceremony/showcase event.

¹ University members of ScotCHEM: University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Heriot Watt University, University of St Andrews, University of Strathclyde

TABLE 1 EXCHANGE OPTIONS					
EXCHANGE	DURATION				MATCH FUNDING
	3	6	3+3	6+6	
Outbound <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant must be based at a ScotCHEM member Department 	✓	✓			Desirable
Inbound <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application must be made through a ScotCHEM member Department 	✓	✓			Essential: degree of match funding
Outbound & Inbound: 3+3 month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outbound applicant must be based at a ScotCHEM member Department Application must be made through a ScotCHEM member Department 			✓		Essential: degree of match funding for inbound exchange
Outbound & Inbound: 6+6 month In exceptional circumstances, a 6+6 outbound-inbound application will be considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outbound applicant must be based at a ScotCHEM member Department Application must be made through a ScotCHEM member Department) 				✓	Essential: 100% match funding for inbound exchange
Industrial exchange: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant must be based at a ScotCHEM member Department 	✓	✓			Essential: minimum 25% match funding required

3. Eligibility criteria

The application call will be open to PGRs and ECRs (see definitions in Annex A).

Non-independent researchers will require a letter of support from their supervisor or line manager. Independent researchers may require line-manager approval, but this is at the discretion of their employer.

For outbound exchanges, the applicant must be studying in/employed by a ScotCHEM University and have at least the duration of the exchange plus one month (to provide sufficient time to submit reports) remaining on their studies or contract from the start of their exchange.

For inbound exchanges, the exchange placement must be in a ScotCHEM member department.

4. Application criteria

The exchange proposal must:

- 4.1 Explain how it will build or strengthen collaborative research relationships with Europe.
- 4.2 Explain how the project aligns with Horizon Europe priority areas (pillars, missions, partnerships)².
- 4.3 Include an impact statement indicating how the exchange will provide scientific/research/industry impact, contribute to national priorities or a justified industrial demand.
- 4.4 Include a statement on agreed or anticipated match funding where applicable.

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

- 4.5 Include a timeline of the exchange. This will be particularly important where the project involves both an outbound and inbound exchange.
- 4.6 For 3+3 month outbound and inbound exchange the application must include if this will be a concurrent exchange or a non-concurrent exchange.
- 4.7 For 6+6 month outbound and inbound exchange, the placements must be concurrent.
- 4.8 In the case of reciprocal exchanges (3+3 and 6+6) the application should seek to include match funding for the inbound applicant. 100% match funding will be essential in the case of a 6+6 month exchange - inbound.
- 4.9 Include a contingency statement if travel is not possible or curtailed
- 4.10 Facilitate exchange of a researcher in the chemical sciences with at least one ScotCHEM university partner, in the case of uniquely inbound exchanges.
- 4.11 All applications will require a statement from the host institution/entity indicating support for the application. This letter should also include written confirmation of any match funding or other support being provided where required or encouraged.
- 4.12 Industrial exchanges must include a minimum of 25% match funding from the industrial partner.

It may also fulfil one or more of the following additional aims:

- 4.13 Provide access to facilities for generation of proof-of-concept data or for enhancing impact of ongoing research
- 4.14 Provide access to skills (not available in the UK) under the scope of continuing professional development/post graduate training – in these circumstances, the application should also include a plan for newly acquired skills-sharing on completion of the exchange (to their research group, institution or all ScotCHEM members, as appropriate)
- 4.15 Generate new links with industry, with the aim of attracting new business to Scotland

5. Assessment criteria for applications

Each proposal will be assessed based upon the application criteria detailed in these guidelines and by the following criteria:

- 5.1 New or strengthened research collaborations
- 5.2 Impact on individual careers
- 5.3 Enhanced access to equipment and/or training and/or knowledge/skills
- 5.4 Alignment to Horizon Europe key priorities
- 5.5 Alignment to national priorities

Each project proposal will be reviewed by a panel of referees. ScotCHEM will ensure that the assessment process is fair and impartial.

ScotCHEM will provide feedback to all applicants in the spirit of providing valuable training for this type of activity. The level of feedback will be dependent upon the volume of applications received and may be provided at a later stage.

6. Administration of the funding call

Projects will be funded between January 1st 2022 and July 31st 2022, and run for no more than 6 months (end-date prior to August 1st 2021).

The maximum amount that can be requested for each exchange is as follow:

- 3 month exchanges will be funded up to a maximum of £5,000
- 6 month exchanges will be funded up to a maximum of £10,000
- 3 + 3 month exchanges maybe funded up to a maximum of £10,000 with a degree of match funding being essential
- 6 + 6 month exchanges will be funded up to a maximum of £10,000 with 100% match funding essential.

Funds are expected to cover primarily travel and subsistence costs. Where necessary funds may be used to cover the cost of isolation on arrival and/or on return from the exchange but within the maximum allowable cap of each exchange type.

Funds can be used for any reasonable costs associated with the exchange. However, it is expected that applications will primarily cover travel and subsistence³. Where possible, research costs are to be covered by the host university (considered as "in kind" contributions), but these costs can be included in "other" costs, provided that the total cost per exchange does not exceed the allowable limits (see above). Any expected research costs should be detailed in the budget provided with each application.

Awardees will be responsible for compliance with all exchange/travel regulations and requirements of their home and host institutions, and for any visa and other travel requirements.

Funds and contracts will be administered through ScotCHEM and the University of St Andrews.

7. Match funding from exchange partners

A key assessment criterion will be the ability to secure match funding for any proposals submitted. Specifically in the event of an exchange with an industrial partner and/or for inbound exchanges.

ScotCHEM, in collaboration with its university partners will also provide advice to applicants on possible match funding routes.

8. A brief plan outlining key stages and dates of the programme

TABLE 2 KEY DATES	
Action	Date
Application Call open	24 September 2021 – 26 November 2021
Assessment of eligibility	By 15 December 2021
Applicant notification*	By 17 December 2021
Access to Programme participants' on-line peer support group	December 2021 (and for duration of the programme)
Launch event	December 2021
Projects commence	January 2022
Mid project review & meeting (with each awardee)	Scheduled dependent upon start and duration of each project
End project review & meeting (with each awardee)	June – August 2022 Scheduled dependent upon start & duration of each project but no later than 31st August 2022
All exchanges completed	End July 2022
Programme event to share outcomes	August 2022

³ Visa costs for incoming or outgoing exchanges/placements will not be covered

Initial outcome report to be submitted by each awardee**	15 th August 2022
Continuation of Alumni Group Programme for on-going peer support	August 2022 onwards

*Feedback will be provided to unsuccessful applicants later. The level of feedback will be dependent on the number of proposals received.

**ScotCHEM will also contact the awardees or their supervisors to gather additional post-exchange impact information within one year of completion of the exchange.

All awardees are also expected to participate in the Saltire entire cohort programme of activities throughout the duration of the scheme.

All other information, guidelines and application forms are available at www.ScotCHEM.ac.uk

Submit your applications to scotchem@st-andrews.ac.uk

Enquiries should be directed to Dr Alan Wiles (Director of Operations ScotCHEM) scotchem@st-andrews.ac.uk

Annex A PGR and ECR Definitions

Definitions	
Post-graduate Researcher (PGR)	Any post-graduate student currently enrolled in a doctoral program in chemical sciences, at a ScotCHEM University or a university/institution in EU Member States, EEA and EFTA countries, with the intention of exchange hosted by a ScotCHEM university.
Early Career Researcher (ECR)	<p>A researcher who is within seven years of the award of their PhD (from the point of successful PhD viva to the point of applying) and within seven years of their first academic appointment (paid contract of employment which lists research or teaching as the primary role). This includes post-doctoral researchers (using the RSE definition of a postdoctoral researcher as "an individual holding a doctoral degree who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a career path of their choosing").</p> <p>Additionally:</p> <p>Maternity/paternity/parental/adoption leave after award of PhD of up to 18 months per child will be taken into consideration when assessing applicant eligibility.</p> <p>Documented periods of leave for other reasons i.e. long-term medical absence, will be taken into consideration when considering applicant eligibility.</p> <p>Researchers must be currently based at a ScotCHEM University or a university/institution in EU Member States, EEA and EFTA countries, with the intention of exchange hosted by a ScotCHEM university.</p>