

TRIPARTITE ADVISORY GROUP

The membership, role and terms of reference of the Tripartite Advisory Group are set out below:

Membership

1. There are three parties to the Tripartite Advisory Group: universities, the Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Government. Each party has a maximum of four places. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning will chair the group. The Secretariat will be led and co-ordinated by the Scottish Government's Higher Education and Learner Support Division with appropriate assistance from Universities Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council as necessary.

Frequency of meetings

2. It is envisaged that the Group will meet at least once and normally twice a year. Meetings will be scheduled at times appropriate to the Spending Review and annual budgetary cycles.

Terms of reference

3. It is proposed that the terms of reference for the Group are to advise the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning on:

- how effectively the:
 - new funding arrangements developed as a consequence of the proposals set out in New Horizons should be and are operating;
 - 'lighter touch' approach adopted by the Scottish Funding Council to managing the relationship with institutions is working;
- the level of public investment in learning and teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities required to maintain broad overall comparability with the rest of the UK, based on (i) the outcomes to be delivered by the sector for the benefit of Scotland, (ii) an assessment of where there is a need to invest in building capacity and (iii) a realistic appraisal of both the rate at which costs are rising and of the efficiencies which can be achieved without compromising quality so that the sector can maintain its competitive position within the UK and internationally; and
- the strategic outputs and outcomes which should be monitored by the Scottish Funding Council.

Relationship with the Further and Higher Education Roundtable

4. The Tripartite Advisory Group has been established with a specific remit around the funding of universities and two matters which are intimately associated with the new funding arrangements: firstly, the 'lighter touch' processes that have to be put in place for the General Fund for Universities and the Horizon Fund for Universities to be managed successfully; and secondly, to help identify what strategic outputs and outcomes should be monitored by the Scottish Funding Council in discharging its reporting obligations to Government. Its composition is appropriate to the specific responsibilities with which it is tasked.

5. The Further and Higher Education Roundtable will continue to provide an opportunity for more broadly based collective discussion among a wider group of key stakeholders. Indeed the success to date of this still relatively new venture offers real hope that it will become increasingly effective and influential as a forum for strategic dialogue and debate.