



Saxton Bampfylde



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

Appointment of Deputy CEO

June 2026 | Reference DCAIB



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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the Scottish Funding Council as Deputy CEO, a role that will also step up to Interim CEO from mid-September to cover for the next few months as we appoint our permanent CEO.

Our purpose is to support and enrich an integrated tertiary education, skills, research and innovation system that maximises the potential of Scotland's people, places and economy, and strengthens our nation's impact globally. This position presents a unique opportunity to unlock that potential, helping to create a more prosperous nation where education, skills, research and innovation drive transformation and deliver value for money. You will be joining SFC at a pivotal time, providing essential leadership to ensure continuity, stability and momentum across the organisation. Joining initially as Deputy CEO, you will be expected to take that leadership role further as Interim CEO where you will operate at the intersection of major agendas shaping a sustainable tertiary education system and the Scottish Government's wider programme of public sector reform. Following the appointment of a permanent CEO, you will continue to play a key leadership role as Deputy CEO for the remainder of your fixed term contract, supporting transition, maintaining delivery and contributing to long-term strategic impact.

Your leadership, professionalism and collaborative approach will be central to advancing transformation across the sector and contributing to a stronger, more prosperous Scotland. This is an exciting time to join and help lead our organisation. We are embracing diverse perspectives and working with greater agility to meet the evolving needs of learners and employers and the sectors that support them. We are harnessing the strengths of our talented team at SFC while deepening partnerships across universities, colleges, training providers, employers, business and industry to deliver meaningful change.

We hope you will be inspired by the potential of this distinctive role at a time of significant transformation. Our staff and Board work as one friendly and welcoming team, and we believe we are at our best when we work in partnership and draw on a wide range of perspectives.

SFC explicitly welcomes applications from individuals with diverse backgrounds, including those with protected characteristics and those with non-traditional career paths.



Professor Emerita Cara Aitchison, Chair



About the Scottish Funding Council

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) is uniquely positioned at the intersection of post-school or 'tertiary' education and Scotland's economic future.

As the national body responsible for the funding and oversight of tertiary education, skills, research and innovation, SFC must ensure that colleges and universities, and from April 2027, training and apprenticeship providers, develop and deliver the learning infrastructure and outcomes, skills base, and research capability that enables Scotland's people, places and economy to thrive.

SFC is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) operating across a stakeholder landscape of increasing complexity and scale, from the First Minister and Scottish Government through to universities, colleges, sector bodies, independent training providers, business and SMEs. Its reach is broad, its accountabilities are high, and its influence on Scotland's people, places and economy and on the nation's standing in the wider world, is profound.

Crucially, the SFC of the future will be a materially different organisation from the SFC of today; this period of transition represents one of the most significant inflection points in the organisation's history. An increasingly challenging external environment and new legislation in the form of the Tertiary Education and Training (Funding and Governance) (Scotland) Act 2026 which comes into effect in April 2027, will substantially expand SFC's remit, responsibilities and reach. SFC's role will shift from that of a funding delivery body to a strategic influencer with a mandate to shape, drive and invest in the skills, education and research system required to deliver Scotland's wellbeing economy.

Alongside this legislative change, SFC is also recruiting a new Chief Executive and developing a new strategic plan to shape and lead the delivery of these new ambitions. The strategic cycle ahead represents an opportunity to position the organisation, not simply as a body that distributes public funding, but as a proactive, strategic and influential investment agency that holds institutions and providers to account for the return on that investment and for the greatest benefit to Scotland's people, places and economy.

SFC will therefore undergo significant change and transformation as we develop our existing relationships with universities and colleges, initiate new relationships with employers and independent training providers, and evolve our services to meet our new responsibilities.

Purpose of the role

Initially, on stepping up to be Interim CEO, you will lead the Scottish Funding Council through a period of transition, providing clear strategic direction, stability and visible leadership. Working closely with the Board, Scottish Government and key stakeholders, the postholder will ensure continuity, maintain confidence and oversee delivery against SFC's strategic priorities.

Following the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive, the postholder will transition back into the newly created role of Deputy CEO for the remaining period of their fixed-term contract. In this capacity, they will play a pivotal role in supporting the Chief Executive to lead the organisation and deliver its strategic ambitions.

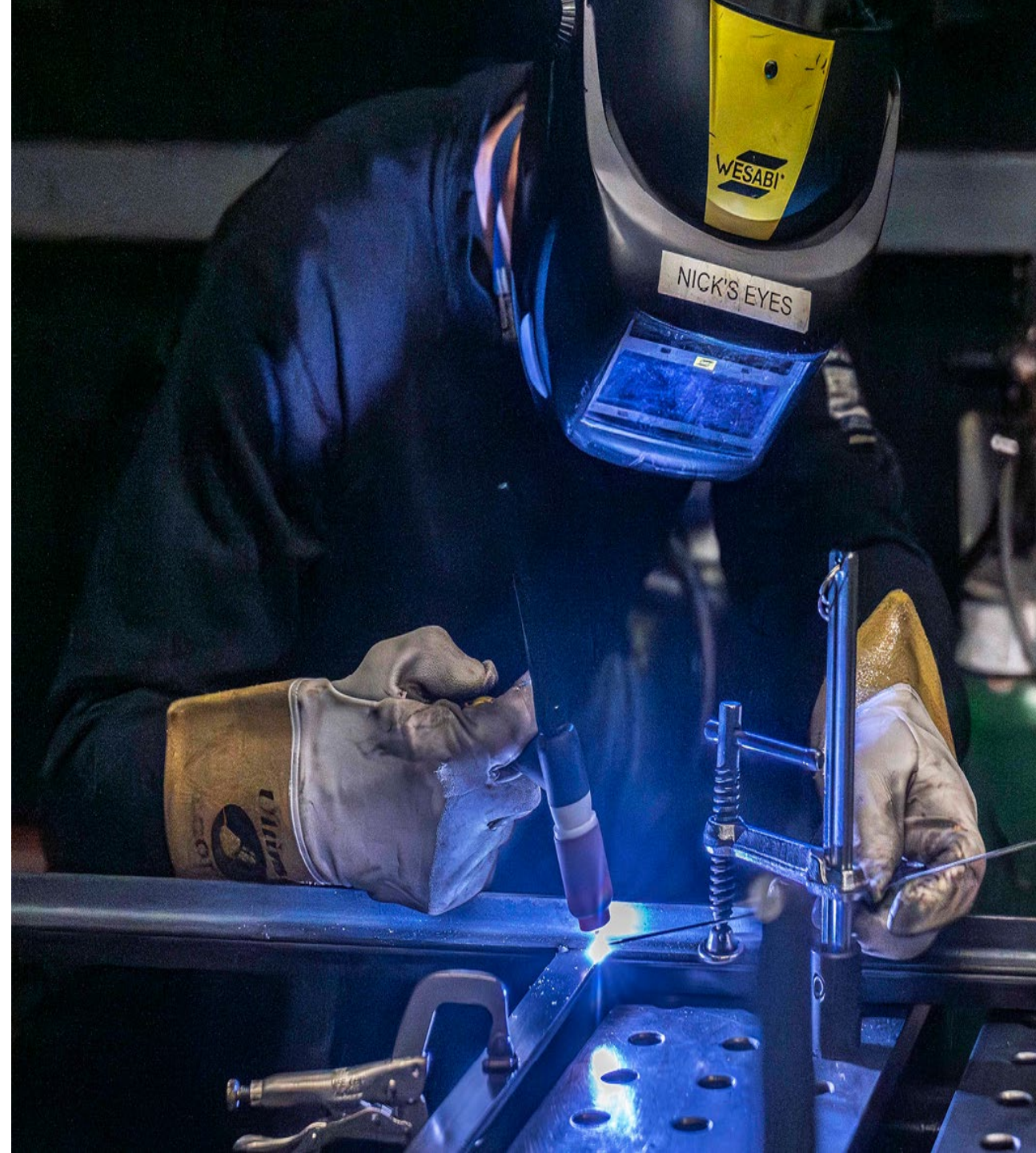
The Deputy CEO will provide executive leadership across the organisation, working with the Directors as part of the Executive Team to coordinate and provide leadership support across all of our major programmes and delivery portfolios, with a focus on strengthening organisational resilience and readiness for change. The Deputy CEO will also deputise for the new Chief Executive as required, including representing SFC with the Board, Scottish Government and wider stakeholders.

This role will require both outward-facing and organisational leadership, influencing sector wide transformation and working collaboratively with funded bodies and partners as well as driving and supporting organisational transformation.



Person Specification

- **Senior transformation and change experience:** Significant organisational change experience, which could include: leadership of cross-organisational teams to deliver major transformation projects, leadership of significant growth programmes, leadership of sector-wide transformation initiatives.
- **Leadership and Delivery:** Proven experience leading at a senior executive level, strong track record of leading high levels of performance and delivering outcomes at pace - including leading change, improving performance and embedding effective change programme and project governance.
- **Stakeholder engagement and influence:** Ability to build and maintain trusted relationships, communicate persuasively, and negotiate effectively across organisational boundaries.
- **Governance, risk and assurance:** Experience of supporting robust governance and assurance, including understanding of public sector accountability, risk management and internal control.
- **Judgement and resilience:** Calm, considered and solutions-focused under pressure; able to handle competing priorities and support others to sustain performance.
- **Strategic insight:** Understanding of tertiary education, skills, research and innovation, or a related area, and their contribution to national outcomes, and the ability to apply evidence and insight to decision-making.
- **Deep personal commitment to advancing inclusion and belonging:** At all levels within SFC and within the tertiary education and skills system more broadly.





Terms of appointment

- Salary: £130,000 – £140,000 (plus uplift to CEO salary range during Interim CEO period)
- 30 days' annual leave plus 13 public holidays
- Civil Service Pension Scheme
- Applications for secondment welcome
- This is a 12 month contract with the potential to extend pending review by the incoming CEO

Process:

- w/c 20 July: First stage interviews with Saxton Bampfylde
- w/c 03 August: Executive Assessments
- w/c 10 August: Panel interviews

Due diligence:

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.





How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Scottish Funding Council on this appointment.

For further information about the role, including details about how to apply, please visit roles.saxbam.com using reference **DCAIB**. Alternatively email Belinda.beck@saxbam.com.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and completing an EDI monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is **noon on Wednesday 08 July 2026**

* The EDI monitoring form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

- **[Read our guide to writing cover letters](#)**



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