

**Minister for Higher and Further Education; and
Minister for Veterans**
Ministear airson Foghlam Àrd-ìre is Adhartach; agus
Ministear airson Seann Ghaisgich
Graeme Dey MSP/BPA



Scottish Government
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27 June 2025

Dear Dr Massey,

Thank you for your letter of 9 May, raising concerns regarding the closure of geophysics and geophysics-related degrees at Scottish universities.

I recognise the value of geoscience and geophysics skills to Scotland's economic and social needs, including in relation to energy transition and tackling the climate emergency. However I should explain that universities in Scotland are autonomous institutions with responsibility for their own strategic and operational decision making, including in relation to course provision. With the exception of controlled subjects, the Scottish Government does not direct individual universities on the allocation of funded places for eligible Scottish students, and it is for the universities to decide how to distribute its funded places between faculties and courses.

Universities across the UK are facing financial challenges due to a range of factors, including the impact of UK immigration policies on international student recruitment, and the UK Government's increase to employer national insurance contributions, which is estimated to cost Scottish universities over £48 million.

The Scottish Government values greatly the world-class teaching and research delivered by our universities, and the significant contribution they make to our economy and society. We listened closely to the sector in the development of this year's budget, which is why we will invest over £1.1 billion in university teaching and research. Since February the Scottish Government has also announced £25 million of additional support to be made available to the Scottish Funding Council, to support universities facing financial challenges.

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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In response to the Withers Review and Purpose and Principles, the Scottish Government has committed to take responsibility for skills planning at the national level, while strengthening regional approaches. This government-led skills planning approach will help develop a better understanding of skills needs at the national level, and how we can better address them, particularly where solutions lie within the education and skills system.

I hope this information is helpful in setting out the Scottish Government's position on the matters raised in your correspondence.

Yours sincerely



GRAEME DEY

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