



Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee

Charlotte Wright,
Chief Executive,
Highlands and Islands Enterprise

The Scottish Parliament
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Sent by email only

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Dear Ms Wright,

ScotGrad scheme

The Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee took evidence from a number of careers advisers at its meeting on 15 September.

Tracey Innes, a careers adviser at the University of Aberdeen said:

'We need to ensure that we have enough specialist and targeted provision for the different stages that young people are at, which will pitch and flow through to higher education, including provision for when they exit higher education. It is now a gap, because it is no longer available, but, up until last year, we had a scheme called ScotGrad, with funding incentives for SMEs to take on graduates. That has been paused or mothballed or whatever you might say—it is not currently available.

The last available data for the graduate labour market showed that 44 per cent were in SMEs, so I am concerned that that scheme has been taken away at a time when we really want to encourage and enable SMEs to take on graduates. The scheme was for graduate internships for six to 12 months, with funding incentives, which I think was shown to mean that they would then take graduates on for the longer term. The scheme plugged a gap between graduation and employment, but that is not available just now.'

I understand that the ScotGrad scheme is run by Highlands and Islands Enterprise. I would be grateful if you could respond to the remarks set out above, specifically:

- Has the ScotGrad been paused and, if so, what are the reasons for this?
- Are there plans to offer the scheme in future years, and, if not, what can be provided to fill the gap?

I would be grateful to receive a response to the above points by Thursday 1 October.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Lindhurst". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G" and "L".

Gordon Lindhurst MSP
Convener