POLICY NOTE

THE ACADEMIC AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS (SRUC) (SCOTLAND) ORDER OF COUNCIL 2024

S.S.I. 2024/219

1. The above instrument is made in exercise of the powers conferred upon the Privy Council by sections 48(1) and 60(3) of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992. The instrument is subject to negative procedure.

Summary box

2. To specify SRUC (a higher education institution) as competent to grant degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards or distinctions (not including those made on completion of a programme of supervised research).

Policy Objectives

3. The Designation of Institutions of Higher Education (The Scottish Agricultural College) (Scotland) (No. 2) Order 2008 provided that SRUC[1] (at the time known as The Scottish Agricultural College) was to be a designated institution of higher education under section 44 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992. Section 48(1) of that Act provides that the Privy Council may specify that an institution within the higher education sector, such as a designated institution, is competent to grant such awards and distinctions as they may specify.

4. In 2021 SRUC submitted an application for taught degree awarding powers to the Privy Council, who in turn sought a recommendation from the Scottish Government on whether SRUC should be specified as competent to award such degrees and other academic awards and distinctions.

5. The Scottish Government sought advice on the SRUC application from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The application has undergone detailed scrutiny by the QAA's Advisory Committee for Degree Awarding Powers between 2021-23 and a recommendation that SRUC met the required criteria, in line with QAA's published guidance (https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/degree-awarding-powers-handbook-scotland.pdf?sfvrsn=9594a081_6), to be specified as competent was received.

6. This Order specifies SRUC as competent to grant degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards or distinctions, except where the award or distinction, of whatever description, is made on the completion of a programme of supervised research. This includes SRUC having the power to award honorary degrees and to grant degrees to members of the academic and other staff of the institution.

[1] SRUC is registered in Scotland under company number SC SC103046.

7. The specification as competent to make academic awards and distinctions, made by the Order, will continue to apply following any change to the name of the institution.

EU Alignment Consideration

8. This instrument is not relevant to the Scottish Government's policy to maintain alignment with the EU.

Consultation

9. The Scottish Government consulted SRUC, the Quality Assurance Agency and the Privy Council during the preparation of this instrument.

Impact Assessments

10. A Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA) has been completed and is attached.

Financial Effects

11. As above.

Scottish Government
Lifelong Learning and Skills Directorate

August 2024