

THE ROYAL  
SOCIETY  
OF EDINBURGH

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# Towards a New Enlightenment

**Our Strategic Framework**

2012 – 2015





**The international standing of a country rests, in the long term, on its intellectual contributions and here the RSE flies the flag for Scotland**

Sir Michael Atiyah OM, FRS, Hon FRSE  
(Fields Medallist, Abel Prize)



**The RSE is a much respected European national academy, maintaining the progressive, outward-looking traditions of the European Enlightenment. It has played a major role in supporting excellence across the whole range of scholarship at the highest level.**

Dr Mary McAleese HonFRSE  
(President of Ireland 1997 – 2011)



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# Foreword

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**As Scotland’s National Academy of the Sciences, Arts & Humanities and Commerce, the RSE has an important role to play in supporting Scotland’s cultural, economic and social well-being in the 21st century.**

Building on our successful contribution in recent years, this Strategy provides a broad framework and clear direction within which RSE Fellows and staff will deliver activities which contribute to the well-being of people in Scotland.

This Framework is intended to be a deliberately crisp and easy to follow statement of our strategic aspirations, not a detailed delivery plan, or definitive list of all that we do. We will set our detailed plans and objectives in relation to areas, for example, Media & Communications, Fundraising and our Human Resources, in other documents, and each year in our Annual Operational Plan.

In the pages that follow we define our vision, objectives, priorities and outcomes – which is the added value difference we aim to make. Setting measurable outcomes is of central importance. These provide a benchmark against which we, and others with whom we work, can measure achievement. In turn this provides meaningful evidence to inform decisions about objectives, priorities and activities for future years.

To achieve our aspirations requires not only a clear commitment by the RSE, but also partnership with **public, private and charitable sector bodies** that share our goals. We will therefore engage actively with others to explore the most effective ways of planning and delivering programmes.

Created in 1783 out of the Scottish and European Enlightenment, we maintain that tradition through our contribution towards supporting Scotland to promote Enlightenment across the Sciences, Arts & Humanities and Commerce.

**Sir John Arbuthnott**  
President

# About Us

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Our mission, as set by a 1783 Royal charter, is **“the advancement of learning and useful knowledge”**. Since then we have made a major contribution to Scottish Society through Fellows. In the past through eminent Fellows, such as Adam Smith, Sir Walter Scott, James Clerk Maxwell and Sir James Black, whose achievements resonate internationally; and more recently Professor Karen Vousden, Sir Michael Atiyah, Sir Paul Nurse, Sir Kenneth Murray and the Right Reverend Richard Holloway. We are unique in Britain and distinctive internationally in the breadth of our Fellowship which ranges across the sciences, medicine, engineering, the social sciences, arts, humanities, business and public service. We promote excellence across the whole range of human understanding and the use of that understanding for the betterment of the national and international society of which the RSE is part.

We are part of the tapestry of Scottish identity, are not influenced or motivated by causes promoted by others and are active on many fronts. We undertake major Inquiries on issues of national and global significance and promote their recommendations. We provide independent and expert advice across a wide range of topical issues and make a significant contribution to the formulation of public policy in Scotland. We contribute to the development of educational and economic policies. We support primary and secondary education and engagement with the young – a recent major development of which has been the creation of the RSE Young Academy of Scotland. We encourage research, entrepreneurial activity and international exchanges. We organise public lectures and promote debate on major contemporary issues. All of this is achieved through the breadth of our intellectual concerns, making us unique amongst the UK’s academies or learned societies.

In delivering our public benefit activities we draw on the considerable strengths and varied expertise of over 1500 Fellows based in Scotland and beyond. The breadth and depth of expertise of these Fellows serves as a first class knowledge base. Their willingness to give generously of their time to support and enable the delivery of our activities is an exceptional free resource, the annual value of which – combining formal engagement and informal comment, discussions and advice provided by the Fellowship – is estimated at around £1m.



# Our Vision & Objectives

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## **Our Vision is:**

- › To continue to build a dynamic and relevant National Academy for Scotland, through a Fellowship of proven excellence that is unique in its breadth across the Sciences, Arts & Humanities and Commerce
- › To serve as an independent source of inspiration, engagement and expertise in Scotland and beyond

## **Our Objectives are:**

### Inspiration

- › To stimulate, support and reward excellence in all areas of learning and research in Scotland
- › To support the translation of new knowledge to business, wealth creation and economic and social well-being
- › To support the development of emerging Scottish talent that will be central to the future leadership and vitality of Scottish society

### Engagement

- › To communicate with a wide audience, both locally and internationally, and provide an important window on the world
- › To be a conduit for relationships with other organisations on matters of national importance
- › To enhance the public profile of Scottish intellectual achievement

### Expertise

- › To provide independent and authoritative advice on matters affecting Scotland's well-being
- › To initiate and lead public discussion on matters affecting Scotland's wellbeing
- › To share, with others, knowledge and information on matters of scientific, economic, social and cultural importance

# Our Priorities

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We will achieve our vision and objectives by continuing to deliver a wide programme of activities across a broad range of subjects. These programmes will be set out in our Annual Operational Plans. Overarching this we have identified areas of priority on which we will focus. These are:

- Continuing to award and administer **fellowships, scholarships and grants** which support learning, research, international collaboration and commercialisation
- Supporting the development of **the RSE Young Academy of Scotland** to help ensure that it achieves its maximum potential
- **Diversifying our funding sources** to enable us to be more proactive in relation to new activities or to expand existing ones
- Contributing to the issues and debates concerning **Scotland's constitutional future** to ensure that such discourse benefits from the breadth and depth of the extensive expertise which RSE Fellows can provide
- Holding events which **enable the public to engage** with and learn more about issues of scientific, social and cultural importance



# The difference we aim to make

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Setting out our vision, objectives and priorities is important. But of most importance are the outcomes that are achieved. Our ultimate aim is to add value and make a difference. We have therefore identified specifically what we envisage that difference will be. This enables us to measure success and will help inform our strategic decisions in the future.

Our overarching aim is to make a contribution towards improving Scotland's economic, cultural and social prosperity, and we work and operate alongside and in partnership with many other individuals and organisations which share and contribute to both achieving that aim and the specific differences we have set below.

- Enhancing the capacity of world-class researchers working in science and culture in Scotland
- Strengthening connections amongst academia, business, the public and the voluntary sectors
- Enhancing the RSE Young Academy of Scotland's capacity to contribute to the future of Scotland
- Enhancing the public's contribution to and understanding of scientific, economic and cultural issues
- Informing and influencing public policy decisions





# The difference we have already made

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Our activities have already added value and made a significant difference. Set out below are some examples of what our programmes have achieved in recent years.

## Building research capacity and leadership

- More than 79% of the Research Fellows we have supported have remained in Scotland and are working in research. 44% of these Fellows have achieved Professorships.
- Since 2003, £6.1m of Scottish Government grant supporting Research Fellowship awards has levered more than £46.8 m of further research funding for the Scottish research base.

## Connecting Scotland internationally

- Since 2002 our international exchange programme has connected leading Scottish-based researchers with researchers in over 50 countries world-wide, and has resulted in more than 400 overseas researchers collaborating with the Scottish research base.
- The exchange programme has levered further research funding for Scottish research from sources such as the European Marie Curie fellowships, the European Science Foundation and the Leverhulme Trust.
- We have developed joint research projects between Scottish and Chinese institutes which are creating longer-term research collaborations between Scotland and China.

## Creating employment and attracting investment

- Over the past 13 years more than 80 companies have been started through our Enterprise Fellowships programme, with some Enterprise Fellows now on their second or third company. More than 60 of these companies have prospered attracting around £100 million of investment and creating several hundred jobs.
- In partnership with the Gannochy Trust, £600,000 spent on recognising outstanding innovation in Scotland has contributed more than £4m into the economy and more than 100 jobs through the spin out activity.

## Helping to shape 21st century education

- We have facilitated positive interactions between the many stakeholders and have been actively involved in a number of the Scottish Government sponsored Curriculum for Excellence activities.
- We have engaged with successive Cabinet Secretaries for Education and Lifelong Learning. Many of our recommendations for STEM subjects have been adopted by the Scottish Government and Education Scotland.
- We facilitated, jointly with the Royal Society of Chemistry, an innovative chemistry exemplar project which produced classroom materials for teachers and learners – a key work stream of the Science and Engineering 21 action plan for Scottish education.

# The difference we have already made

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## Influencing public policy

- Mirroring recommendations of our inquiry into the Future of Scotland's Hills and Islands, the Scottish Government initiated further inquiries into rural land use and the allocation of future CAP funding in Scotland. It also embraced five specific recommendations made by us.
- Our submissions on climate change encouraged MSPs to set the challenging emission reduction targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act. MSPs received many recommendations over this Act, but our intervention was significant in advising that an ambitious programme of emission reductions was both achievable and recommended on expert scientific analysis.

## Engaging with the public

- In the last 10 years more than 30,000 school-aged children, predominantly those in the state sector and out-with the central belt have benefited and learnt from our schools education programme.
- In partnership with local communities in different parts of Scotland, we have enhanced and improved the understanding and appreciation that people, particularly school aged children, have for their communities, their history and their environment, and have left a legacy on which to build. Almost 6000 members of the local communities in Arbroath and Dumfries & Galloway attended our events.
- Gathering public opinion is a pivotal part of the evidence gathering process associated with our major inquiries. In our most recent inquiry on "Facing up to Climate Change", public evidence gathering sessions were held in Aberdeen, Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness and Orkney. Schools across Scotland also participated in an innovative Facing up to Climate Change competition.

## Celebrating Scotland's great legacy

- We promote Scotland's greats and their contribution to the world. A recent example is our recognition and international promotion of James Clerk Maxwell, which includes a partnership award with the Institute of Electric & Electronic Engineers – the world largest professional association for the advancement of technology with 375,000 members in 160 countries.



**From the outset, the RSE has encouraged discovery and innovation. That role will remain vital if Scotland is to be at the forefront of creating and using new knowledge.**

Professor Peter Higgs FRS FRSE



**The advancement of learning and useful knowledge, as set out in the RSE's Charter of 1783, has rarely been more essential than at this time when Scotland debates its constitutional future. The Strategic Framework for 2012-2015 sets down guidance for these debates.**

Sir Tom Farmer CVO, CBE, KCSG, FRSE





# SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL ACADEMY

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