

A person is shown in profile, looking through the eyepiece of a microscope. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong yellowish-green light source illuminating the microscope and the person's face. The person's hand is visible, holding a slide in place on the microscope stage.

Making Exceptional Happen

*Helping remarkable young Scots study internationally -
transforming their own lives, connecting Scotland with the
world, and strengthening our shared future.*



**Scottish
International
Education Trust**

Scottish International Education Trust:

Providing life-shaping experiences for exceptional Scots

The Scottish International Education Trust (SIET) exists to help exceptional Scots gain transformative international experiences. By providing funding for talented Scottish people at a critical stage in their lives, we can help them build knowledge, skills and perspectives to forge successful careers and be forces for good in the world.

Our opportunity

International experiences shape lives. For Scots with the potential to be at their very top of their chosen profession, global education in all its forms enables them to learn from the best, develop their craft, and push themselves to excel. At SIET, our alumni often tell us that their time abroad was a catalyst for their future success.

We also know that global experiences prepare people for a changing workplace and for our connected world. Evidence shows, for example, that higher education students who undertake a period of study abroad are more likely to find employment one year after graduation.


International experiences also give people the opportunity to see a new country from the inside, and exchange ideas with people from

“The award I received from SIET came at a pivotal moment in my conducting career. It was to be a profound learning experience and springboard for my development, not only as a musician but as a human being.”

Cecilia Weston, conductor

other cultures. Some 93% of students who have studied overseas say they have a greater appreciation of other cultures as a result, and 91% say they have improved their language skills.

Through global travel connected to their career, a new generation of Scots will be better able to understand the world in which they live, so they can change it for the better.



91%

Students studying overseas reporting an improvement in their language skills

European Commission, European Education Area, Quality education and training for all – Towards enhanced mobility and cooperation in higher education

The Journey So Far

Shaping new futures for half a century

Our challenge

Exciting global experiences should be open to all exceptional Scots, regardless of their ability to pay. Yet students across the UK continue to be hit by an ongoing cost-of-living crisis. The financial challenges facing higher education also mean some universities can no longer afford to offer international experiences to their students. Brexit has similarly affected the breadth and

“Students from less advantaged backgrounds that go abroad tend to get better degrees and better jobs – and yet while they stand to gain the most from this experience these students are underrepresented in mobility.”

Universities UK, Social Inclusion and Engagement in Mobility, 2021

depth of global learning opportunities available to the current generation of young people. It all means that many talented Scots are missing out on potentially transformational overseas experiences.

Our story

The Scottish International Education Trust exists to help exceptional Scots gain transformative international experiences. When someone with ability and promise needs to further their study or professional training overseas, a cash

injection from SIET can make a huge difference. The Trust was the brainchild of Sir Sean Connery who, having had a scant education, was passionate about global learning and the empowerment it brings.

Our impact

We're delighted to have supported thousands of Scots at crucial points in their journeys, who are now using their skills and talents for the benefit of Scotland and the wider world. In 2024, we made 16 awards totalling over £43,000 to support those studying history, the visual arts, music, design, science, the law, medicine and the caring professions. Successful applicants have one thing in common: a burning desire to use their talents to better themselves and contribute to society, at home and on the international stage.



The Journey So Far

Shaping new futures for half a century

These people are musicians who have gone on to enthral audiences across the globe; biologists now making major contributions to animal conservation; Harvard Law School graduates protecting and promoting human rights. And those on their way to careers in forensic medicine, bio- and geo-sciences, global economics and cyber security. They are carrying on a long tradition of gifted Scots going out into the world and making a difference wherever they go.

Our successful applicants work at Scottish universities and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, at prestigious institutions in London, New York, Boston, Vienna and Hamburg, and with the United Nations in Nairobi. Notable SIET fellows include: Tom Harrold, outstanding Scottish composer; Amy McKinnon, well-respected political journalist in the US; Eleanor Morton, comedian; Mark Blyth, political scientist; Jujhar Dhanda, lawyer; Carol McLeod, forensic scientist; and Cecilia Weston, conductor.

"The award has been, for me personally, much more than just financial help. It was a really huge confidence boost to know that someone believed in me."

Carolyn Edmondson, SIET awardee 2023.

Our distinctive approach

Our work stands on five pillars:

Established: We have been awarding grants to talented young people for 50 years. We have an eye for spotting potential, and the knowledge of what works.

Expert: Our Board of experts makes our awards, and represents a broad range of expertise and interests, including: widening participation in education; business; government, the natural and social science, heritage, history and the arts.

Connected: We have built up strong networks across academia and industry, and work closely with tutors, teachers, referees and partner organisations to identify talented Scots who can benefit most from international experience.

Responsive: We are small, nimble and flexible enough to consider each application on its merits, without relying on an algorithm which may mean we miss out on the most extraordinary Scots who need our support.

Efficient: Our overheads are low and allow us economies of scale, so that we can support more people with less. Almost all of the value of any gift goes directly to fund experiences for bright Scots with potential.



The Next Steps on the Road

Helping new generations of Scots seek new horizons

Our plan

This is a golden opportunity to provide life-shaping international experiences for the next generation of talented Scottish people. We are incredibly grateful for the founding support of the Sean Connery Foundation, which has underpinned our impact to date. Now, we stand ready to build on what we have learned and grow what we can do for future generations of Scots and Scottish society.

Your gift of £3,000 will enable us to support one exceptional Scot this year; a gift of £84,000 will enable us to endow that award in perpetuity, securing our impact for future generations. Our long-term ambition is to be able to support 20 talented Scots every year, by growing our endowment to £1m by 2030.

We have always awarded a relatively small number of high-impact grants and our long-term goal remains to do so. Limiting grants to 20 per year will enable us to continue to leverage the personal networks and expertise of trustees, maximising our chances of spotting and supporting potential.

Join us

Throughout history, large numbers of Scots have travelled overseas, to learn from the world, search for opportunities, and build lives. Today, we are seeking support to continue this tradition for a new generation. If you share our belief in the power of international experiences to shape the lives of exceptional Scots, we would be thrilled to talk with you.

"The funding from SIET has been a life raft for me... that I'm doing the right thing, that my research is worth something, and that I'm talented enough to get funding."

Cody June Cunningham, a young, working class Scot studying international security in Vienna and SIET awardee 2023.