

# Candidate Brief

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Chair of the SRUC Board





# Chair of the SRUC Board

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### DISCLAIMER

These particulars are issued by The Secretary's Office, SRUC, Edinburgh. They are intended to represent a description of the duties at the time of writing, although this accuracy cannot be guaranteed. SRUC reserves the right to vary these particulars or make no appointment at all. Neither in part nor in whole do these particulars form any contract between SRUC and any individual.

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## A Message from the Current Chair



There has never been a more pivotal moment for SRUC, and its institutional potential for Scotland as a whole. Under Professor Powell's leadership, SRUC is in excellent strategic shape and has a clear sense of purpose, with a strong vision and mission that places the institution at the heart of the green recovery and driving a sustainable natural economy.

This sense of purpose has been a key factor in attracting outstanding new Non-Executive (NED) Board members. We have found that they bring a personal commitment to the challenges SRUC seeks to address, as well as excitement about supporting the institution in its ambitions as a tertiary institution. We have made a number of strong and diverse appointments which have significantly enhanced our Boardroom dynamic, strengthened our skills in supporting the institution and building an even more effective governance team. We are now ready to shift into a new phase, reflective of a fast-changing external environment and an ambitious programme of change for SRUC.

Led by the Chair, the Board supports and monitors the high-level delivery of SRUC's ambitions and visions as set out in the Strategic Plan. The Chair's duties include promoting the effective operation of the Board, ensuring that all members work constructively and together take responsibility for decisions, and have confidence in the procedures which are laid down for the conduct of business.

As our new Chair, you can expect to work with a group of committed, intelligent and rigorous Board members who bring deep understanding and experience from a range of sectors. The Executive Leadership Team, led by Professor Wayne Powell, are ambitious for SRUC, led by their values and bring their vision, commitment and energy to the Board in a way that engages, challenges and informs. SRUC will offer you open doors – both to colleagues and to students – and open minds in how we achieve what is best for the institution together.

This is your opportunity to be instrumental in the governance of an organisation of strategic national importance, at a period of exceptional change in the Higher Education sector and within the rural economy in Scotland, and beyond.

**Sandy Cumming, CBE**  
Chair of the SRUC Board



## Introduction

**It is one of the great privileges of my life to lead this outstanding institution. As we face the complex and layered challenges of climate change, feeding a growing and ageing global population and creating sustainable and resilient economies, the need for organisations that are driving the skills, research, innovation and business engagement to address these issues is critical.**

SRUC is ambitious, connected, responsive and expert. We are a small, specialist institution with pan-Scotland locations and a global reach. Formed in 2012, but built on a history of over 100 years, we are a young institution with a long heritage.

We are quite unlike any other institution, with a tertiary education model (from FE to PhD), a world-class research base and unrivalled extension, knowledge exchange and consultancy services. Therefore we are uniquely placed to respond to the global challenges facing us collectively, and we have the strength, courage and audacity to do it.

Our vision is to become Scotland's Enterprise University at the heart of our sustainable natural economy. Our central purpose is to promote greater sustainability of our natural resources, and of the sectors that build the skills to deliver this for the benefit of Scotland as a whole. This sense of purpose brings new colleagues to work with us, students to join our courses and programmes, and partners to collaborate with us. We believe that this passion and commitment has brought new Board members to join us in recent years and we hope it ignites a flame for you too as a potential new Chair of the SRUC Board.

Sandy Cumming CBE will retire as SRUC Chairman from April 2022, having completed his term of office, and we are seeking to appoint a new Chair to lead the Board of SRUC into this new era for the institution and indeed Scotland. We are looking forward to building on Sandy's outstanding leadership to continue and indeed accelerate our ambitious growth plans, supported by the Board's collective networks, influence, advocacy and partnership.

SRUC has taken huge strides in recent years, including securing more than £20 million from UKRI to create a digital twinned dairy in our Barony campus, winning the Queen's Anniversary Prize and advancing to the scrutiny stage of gaining Taught Degree Awarding Powers. Our place-based mission is reflected in our investments that include: a new Rural Veterinary Innovation Centre in Inverness, a food hub (Seed Pod) in Craibstone and the UK's first Tertiary Vet School. In all of this and more, we have been supported by a Board that is engaged, committed, energetic and generous.

We are ready for the next stage in our story, and we look forward to working with a new Chair who has the courage and passion to make this happen with us.

**Wayne Powell**

Chief Executive and Principal – SRUC





## Our origins

**SRUC is a specialist higher education institution delivering tertiary education, research and consultancy, created in October 2012 from the merger of Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge Colleges with the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) as the host institution.**

We currently operate our main education activities from six SRUC campuses across Scotland – **Aberdeen** (Craibstone Estate, Aberdeen), **Riverside** (Ayr), **Barony** (Parkgate, Dumfries), **Edinburgh** (King's Buildings, Edinburgh), **Elmwood** (Cupar, Fife), **Oatridge** (Ecclesmachan, West Lothian) and also deliver teaching in collaboration with the **Glasgow Botanic Gardens** (Glasgow).

You can see SRUC's evolution from 1900 to the 2012 merger above; we are a young institution with a long heritage.



## Who we are

**Our Vision:** Scotland's Enterprise University at the heart of our sustainable natural economy

**Our Mission:** Creating and mobilising knowledge and talent. Partnering locally and globally to benefit Scotland's natural economy.

These reflect the importance of the work that we do in helping meet the global grand challenges, in responding to the climate emergency, and in collaborating on unprecedented levels to make the changes that our sector is capable of. Our Vision and Mission translate not only to the global, but to the national, and local scales. Given that SRUC's footprint reaches into many of the more remote and rural areas of Scotland, then our role as an anchor tertiary institution, that understands deeply the communities and regions within which we sit, is critical.

Our specialism is the Natural Economy, taking a systemic approach, maintaining a customer focus, and embracing new ways of working.

The Natural Economy is defined as comprising six sub-sectors that either directly use, rely or contribute to conserving natural resources, namely: tourism, food and drink, fishing and aquaculture, agriculture, energy (including renewables), and forestry, logging and manufacture of wood.

In 2018, the natural economy contributed £29.1 billion gross value added (GVA) to the Scottish economy – more than a fifth of its total – and employed 290,100 people. This equates to 11 per cent of all employment across Scotland. Whereas most of the GVA generated by the natural economy is due to energy, employment is more evenly distributed across tourism, agriculture, energy, and food and drink. Nature-related tourism made the largest contribution with over 87,000 jobs.

SRUC employs approximately 1,300 staff operating from 6 campuses, 8 farms, 25 consulting offices, 6 research centres and 8 veterinary surveillance centres located primarily across Scotland. SRUC's principal purpose is to advance education, science, research and environmental protection and improvement in the rural and land-based industries, both domestically and internationally. The commercial consultancy, skills training and research activities are undertaken through SAC Commercial Limited. It is SRUC's intention to become a fully-fledged university – a new and unique kind of university for the 21st century that is regional, accessible, market-focused and responsive to a diverse range of challenges in the emerging natural economy. We will be a strong and unique anchor institution where research, skills and business converge. Such convergence will create new insights that deliver big strategic leaps and completely new propositions for business, society and government.

All of this activity is firmly rooted in our distinctive ethos of a Scotland-wide presence through regional centres of global excellence. Our objective is to deliver on shared goals with government, business and other partners to drive forward the natural economy through inclusive growth, job creation and generation of commercial opportunities.

We will be a research-led organisation pushing on to fulfil higher, world leading goals. Our work will also deliver towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (now integrated within the NPF). Our regional presence in Scotland is essential to allow us to be responsive to local needs. The unique integration of our research, education and consulting specialisms are key to allowing SRUC to deliver an unparalleled service to our students and customers. We are moving towards a business model comprising integrated regional specialisms/faculties, which maximise the potential of our people and expertise while creating new opportunities for partnerships, co-location, investment and growth.

Each faculty's activities will have a strong focus on, but will not be limited to:

NORTH:	Rural Land Use and Veterinary & Animal Science
CENTRAL:	Natural Sciences, Policy and Enterprise & Business
SOUTH & WEST:	Land Use, Pasture-based Agriculture and Forestry

As part of our commitment to excellence in multi-disciplinary work, we are establishing a limited number of cross-faculty, outcome driven Transdisciplinary Research Centres (TRCs) to develop research partnerships within Scotland, across the UK and internationally to tackle specific challenges.

## Boards and Principal & Chief Executive

The SRUC Board is chaired by Sandy Cumming CBE.

The Principal and Chief Executive of SRUC is **Professor Wayne Powell**.

Academic and government funded not-for-profit business is conducted through SRUC, while commercial (for profit) activities are conducted through SAC Commercial Limited.

Current Board Committees include: Academic Board, Remuneration and Appointments, Audit and Risk, Finance and Estates, and Student Liaison. SAC Consulting business is addressed by the SAC Commercial Limited Board.



## SRUC Board

The members of the SRUC Board are listed below.

### Chair

Sandy Cumming CBE

### Non-Executive SRUC Directors

Mia Aitchison (Union-nominated Member)

Annette Bruton OBE

Roz Azli (Student Member)

David Bell

Cara Sangster (Student Member)

Chris Sayers

Julie Fortune (Union-nominated Member)

Margaret Khnichich

Elma Murray OBE

Sir Pete Downes

Professor Michael Smith

Jim Hume

Ian Ross OBE

Andrew Peddie

Bruce Wood CVO (Vice Chair)

Duncan Mackay (Staff Member – from December 2021)

Zach Reilly (Staff Member – from December 2021)

Jane Craigie

### Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

Principal and Chief Executive, Board Member

Interim Commercial Director

Academic Director

Chief of Staff

Finance Director

Director of Marketing, Digital and Communications

**Professor Wayne Powell**

**Andrew Lacey**

**Professor Jamie Newbold**

**Gavin Macgregor**

**Hugh Anderson**

**Caroline Bysh**

## Governance Structure

SRUC is a company limited by guarantee (SC103046) and is a registered Scottish charity (SC003712). SRUC's principal purpose is to advance education, science, research and environmental protection and improvement in the rural and land-based industries, both domestically and internationally.

SAC Commercial Ltd (SC148684), a wholly owned subsidiary of SRUC, undertakes SRUC's commercial activities in the areas of Consultancy, Education and Research.

SRUC's learning activities are funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). SRUC continues to receive a proportion of its funding for its research, veterinary and advisory activities directly from the Scottish Government.

SAC Corporate Trustee Ltd operates as the trustee of the SAC Foundation, a charitable trust which receives the profits from SAC Commercial Ltd for investment in SRUC. The trustee holds the shares in SAC Commercial Limited as trustee for the Foundation.

Academic and government funded not-for-profit business is conducted through SRUC, while commercial (for profit) activities are conducted through SAC Commercial Limited.

## The Role of Chair of the SRUC Board

The Chair is responsible for the leadership of the Board and, together with the Board and the Principal, helps provide high-level strategic direction to SRUC to ensure delivery of its key objectives.

The Chair should promote the wellbeing and efficient operation of the Board, ensuring that all Board Members work together effectively and have confidence in the procedures laid down for conduct of business. S/He ensures that Board members apply the highest standards of corporate governance and observe the accepted principles of public life.

The Chair ensures that the Board discusses those issues which it needs to discuss and discharges its responsibilities in a business-like way. S/He must be assured that Board sub-committees, which play a central role in the proper conduct of the Board's business, report back appropriately.

The Chair ensures that SRUC is well connected to its stakeholders, including to staff and students, and plays an ambassadorial role on behalf of SRUC.

## Key Responsibilities

- Leadership of the Board, its effectiveness and its conduct;
- Ensuring that the Board acts in accordance with its Articles of Association and with accepted standards of behaviour in public life;
- Ensuring that the Board sets the strategic direction of the institution and that performance is adequately assessed against the objectives set by the Board;
- Ensuring that the Board exercises collective responsibility;
- Acting as a critical friend to SRUC, to the Principal and Chief Executive and to members of the Executive Leadership Team, being mindful of the boundary between governance and management;
- Liaising with Committee Chairs between Board and Committee meetings;
- Representing SRUC at meetings with external bodies and stakeholders including the Committee of Scottish Chairs, the Scottish Funding Council, and Scottish Government and represents the Board at ceremonial events, including graduations;
- Chairing two SRUC trusts, comprising 4– 6 meetings annually and one meeting of SAC Corporate Trustee Ltd;
- Representing SRUC in an ambassadorial role, using personal influence and networking skills where appropriate, to support SRUC's aims and objectives;
- Acting on behalf of the Board under formalised delegated authority to take forward matters between Board meetings, with such matters to be reported formally to the next meeting of the Board;
- In liaison with the Company Secretary, ensuring an adequate and effective induction process is in place for all new Board members and that there are on-going development opportunities for Board members to enable the Board to effectively discharge its responsibilities;
- Contributing to the governance of SRUC through membership of the Remuneration & Appointments Committee;
- Regular liaison with the chair of SAC Commercial;
- Being responsible for the appraisal of the Principal and Chief Executive, in accordance with approved arrangements and to undertake the annual appraisal of Board members, including meeting individual members and relevant follow up.

## Person Specification

SRUC is committed to promoting all aspects of equality, human rights and inclusion and welcomes expressions of interest from all sectors of the community. Please note however that we cannot accept applications from current students or members of staff. In addition, applicants must not have been a member of staff or a student of SRUC at any time in the year to April 2022. Current Board members who are not members of staff or students are eligible to be appointed, as is any former Board member (not being a current member of staff or student), providing at least a year has elapsed at the time of appointment since that member left the Board.

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Skills / Abilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant professional expertise and knowledge in matters relevant to the successful operation of a large and diverse organisation (e.g. commercial acumen, risk management, organisational and cultural change)</li> <li>• Demonstrable acumen in navigating through periods of change within a wider political context</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate leadership skills and engender respect from others</li> <li>• Ability to interpret information, debate constructively and rigorously challenge</li> <li>• Networking, influencing and advocacy skills</li> <li>• Media skills</li> <li>• Ability to influence opinions and outcomes</li> <li>• Ability to communicate at a senior level and to explain issues and decisions verbally and in writing</li> <li>• Understanding of the strategic planning process</li> <li>• Understanding of financial and budgetary processes</li> <li>• Empathy with the values and vision of SRUC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal expertise in an area relevant to the responsibilities of the Board</li> </ul>
<b>Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant high-level experience in the tertiary or higher education sector</li> <li>• Significant experience and expertise of strategic leadership and change management within a large, complex organisation</li> <li>• Experience of chairing senior bodies and working alongside Chief Executives within complex organisations in the private, public or third sectors</li> <li>• Experience of networking with senior external stakeholders from private, public or third sectors organisations and of interacting effectively with politicians, civil servants and industry representatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of commercial consultancy</li> <li>• Experience of representing an organisation in an ambassadorial role</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of education and research funding</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of the principles of good corporate governance and their effective implementation</li> <li>• Awareness of probity issues, a commitment to the highest standards of integrity, transparency and impartiality</li> <li>• Understanding of the economic, social and political dynamics in Scotland and more widely</li> <li>• A deep understanding of the work of SRUC and its role in Scottish society, economy and the further/higher education sector</li> </ul> <p><b>Candidates must have knowledge of three or more of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business, industry and enterprise</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• The international environment, particularly in relation to research, higher education or agriculture</li> <li>• Risk management oversight</li> <li>• Legal work</li> <li>• Public sector, including government and local authorities</li> <li>• Knowledge of agriculture and the rural sector</li> <li>• SRUC or an equivalent higher or further education or research-intensive organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the political and funding systems and streams in Scotland in this area</li> </ul>



## Personal Attributes

The Chair will have a strong personal commitment to higher and/further education, research and commercial consultancy and have empathy with the values, aims and objectives of SRUC. S/he will share SRUC's vision and aspirations of national and international excellence and will understand the multiple academic and economic drivers needed to underpin this.

Individual Board members and the Board collectively should at all times conduct themselves in accordance with the accepted high standards of behaviour in public life, which embrace selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

**Essential personal attributes for the Chair include:**

- Diplomacy and sensitivity
- Sound judgement and judiciousness
- Ability to deal with conflict in a constructive manner
- Ability to establish good working relationships with a diverse range of people (staff, students, other Board members)
- Ability to demonstrate commitment to equality, human rights and inclusion
- Integrity, tact, discretion, independence and objectivity
- Calm, measured approach
- Ability to challenge constructively

## Period of Appointment

The appointment will be made for an initial period of three years from April 2022, which may be renewable for a further period of three years subject to approval by the Board following recommendation of the Remuneration and Appointments Committee.

## Remuneration

This role is remunerated at a rate of £24,500 per annum plus expenses for the time commitment indicated below.

## Time Commitment

It is estimated that the Chair will need to devote the time equivalent to at least 40 days per year to fulfil effectively the responsibilities of the post. The has embraced modern technologies by making extensive, and effective, use of online meetings, thereby reducing travel and carbon footprints.

There will be an occasional requirement to attend events in the evening and for the Chair to be flexible and to attend meetings at relatively short notice.

SRUC requires to be able to contact the Chair at all times.

The estimate of the time that the successful appointee will need to devote is based on preparation for, travel to and participation in the meetings and other events taking place over the course of a normal year. SRUC is based throughout Scotland and meetings and events take place across the country. These are usually:

- Four regular SRUC Board meetings (usually held between 9.30am and 3pm on weekdays).
- Four meetings of the Remuneration & Appointments Committee (held in advance of the Board meetings).
- Regular monthly scheduled meetings with the Principal and Chief Executive and Committee Chairs;
- Attendance at the Scottish Chairs meetings and chairing four to six SRUC trusts meetings each year;
- Annual graduation ceremonies (two each year, held in Glasgow in July and November).
- Lectures, stakeholder events; dinners and other social events held during the year, usually in late afternoon or in the evening;
- Conduct of other duties or involvement in Board business between meetings.

## Application, Interview and Election Process

The appointment process, which conforms to the requirements of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016, comprises three distinct stages: application, interview and election.

Aspen People Ltd. Has been appointed to support SRUC with the recruitment of the Chair of the SRUC Board. To apply, please upload your application (CV, covering letter and equal opportunities form) by clicking [HERE](#). All applications must include the following:

- A full CV with your education and professional qualifications and full employment history, where possible giving details of budgets and numbers of people managed, relevant achievements in recent posts.
- A short covering letter of no more than two A4 sized pages explaining why this appointment interests you and how you meet the appointment criteria and key competencies as detailed in the candidate brief.
- Names of at least three referees. Please note, referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.
- Please provide daytime, evening and mobile telephone numbers, together with an appropriate, confidential and acceptable e-mail address for all correspondence relating to your application.

You should receive an automatic acknowledgment of your application – if you do not, please contact [Katy Gall](#) on **0141 212 7555**.

## Contact Information:

Should you wish to have an informal, confidential discussion about the post, please contact: [Donogh O'Brien](#) at Aspen People Ltd on **0141 212 7555**.

## Closing Date:

The closing date for all applications is noon on **Monday 10th January 2022**.

## Interview:

The Chair Election Committee will review all applications and determine which of them meet the criteria for appointment as set out above. Candidates selected for interview will be individually informed in writing. Interviews will be conducted during mid February 2022 – candidates may be asked to prepare a short presentation as part of this process.

Those who in the judgement of the Chair Election Committee meet the criteria will be declared candidates in an election. If you are aware that you are unable to attend for interview on the above date, please inform us at the earliest possible opportunity.

## Election:

The final stage of the process is an online election amongst those individuals declared as candidates following interview. The electorate comprises students, staff and Board members of SRUC. Voting in the election will take place in February 2022. Candidates will have the opportunity to set out an election message which will be distributed electronically by SRUC to the electorate. And to participate in hustings or other election arrangements. Full details are set out in the Rules for the Chair Election, which were approved by the SRUC Board and available [HERE](#).

The election will be held in a first-past-the-post format, therefore the candidate who receives the highest number of votes will be declared the winner and will be appointed as Chair under the terms set out above.





## Equal Opportunities Policy Statement:

It is the policy of SRUC to provide equality of opportunity for all applicants for employment and for all its employees.

This policy of equal opportunity will apply regardless of a person's gender, age, marital status, parental status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, HIV status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender reassignment, transsexualism or physical or mental disability, or any other inappropriate distinction.

SRUC is committed to the development and use of employment procedures and practices, which do not discriminate and which will provide genuine equality of opportunity for all employees.

## Links to Supplementary Information on SRUC and SAC Consulting

The following additional links may be of particular interest for this role.

### SRUC

The SRUC website, [www.sruc.ac.uk](http://www.sruc.ac.uk), provides a significant amount of information about the organisation which may be of interest to prospective candidates.

About SRUC: <https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/connect/about-sruc/>

SRUC Annual Accounts to 31 March 2019:

[https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/media/8d8e2ee68c5d808/annual\\_accounts\\_to\\_31\\_march\\_2019.pdf](https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/media/8d8e2ee68c5d808/annual_accounts_to_31_march_2019.pdf)

Information on the current Boards and Principal & Chief Executive:

<https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/connect/about-sruc/policies-compliance/governance/>

### SRUC Education

Courses and training overview: <https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/courses-training/>

### SRUC Research

Research overview: <https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/research/>

### SRUC Business Services

Business services overview: <https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/business-services/>

### SAC Consulting

SAC Consulting Overview: <https://ww1.sruc.ac.uk/sac-consulting/>