**Universities Innovation Fund National Priorities**

**University of Edinburgh response**

The University of Edinburgh has developed a comprehensive programme of innovation activities, including initiation of substantial improvements to our strategy and operational delivery model which could be delivered from 2016-17 onwards. These long-term plans, with a horizon of 5-10 years, are intended to address the “fundamental re-thinking” desired by SFC in the transition from KTG to UIF, and the wider aspirations of both the University and the Scottish Government under the CAN DO agenda.

Investment in these plans would represent a significant financial commitment by the University, in addition to SFC income for these activities. Our plans are, however, dependent on a stable underlying SFC funding environment and the deliverables outlined presume a final funding allocation to the University of Edinburgh, in overall terms and specifically for UIF, consistent with the headline commitments to Higher Education in the Spending Review statement. Provided that an appropriate funding settlement is reached, the University of Edinburgh also expects to be able to match fund and utilise the Platform Grant of £250k.

The University of Edinburgh, placed in the global top 25 of the QS and THE rankings and 4th in the REF2014 by research power, is already skilled in industry engagement and company formation but our ambition is to innovate apace. The University already contributes £2bn GVA and 36,000 jobs to the Scottish economy, at a rate of £9.53 for every £1 from the Scottish Government. In 2014-15 we started 44 companies, increased income from industry by 15% over the previous year, attracted two unicorns and we have invested heavily, both in terms of time and money. For instance, this enabled UoE to become the only member of the Alan Turing Institute in the north of Britain. The University is seeking to capitalise on the nascent potential of data-driven innovation, ubiquitous across all research themes, to drive regional economic growth. We have invested further in the development of the ecosystem through partnership in the City Region Deal, leading a consortium for the recent BIS Science & Innovation audits and developing our plans for the Learning Mile, including the forthcoming Data Technology Institute (DTI). This strategy is already creating visible success with the co-location of an Intel microprocessor design team into Edinburgh, the only such location in Europe. Behind Intel we are developing a strong pipeline of well-known companies who have expressed interest in co-locating in the DTI. These developments are truly ground breaking for Scotland at a time when inward investment is needed for the economy.

Furthermore, realising the importance of broader industry engagement we are changing how ERI interacts with companies large and small and supports our outstanding staff and students in their commercial endeavours. We will continue to be active in areas traditionally supported by KTG that remain important but which are not explicitly addressed by the national priorities below.

**Priority 1 and 2. Promote entrepreneurial activities to students during their studies; and increase development opportunities for and uptake of entrepreneurial training and education, and develop institutions’ practitioner led entrepreneurial training**

We will promote entrepreneurial activities to our students through a variety of channels, including those below. Opportunities for entrepreneurial training will be fully or partially practitioner led. We participate in national initiatives promoting entrepreneurship such as Scotland CAN DO to ensure our students have a wide exposure to activities in this area. Specifically, in 2016-17 we will:

- through Launch.ed, continue to support under- and postgraduate entrepreneurs. This includes becoming a recognised delivery partner for 3DS (3 Day Start-up) - a 3 day intensive workshop forming teams around business ideas developed at the event itself. Launch.ed will also continue to deliver the Bootcamp, an intensive 2-part workshop, which covers a wide range of enterprise issues on a very practical level, available to both students and staff;
- continue to lead and deliver the Enterprise Campus pilot with partners Strathclyde and Aberdeen, supporting postgraduate student entrepreneurs at all Scottish universities, for at least the next 18 months, and to lead discussions on its future. Building on its success, the Bootcamp model has been exported to Enterprise Campus;
• maintain the recently increased uptake of Enterprise Fellowships from the RSE, RAE and BBSRC;
• deliver a UoE student business plan competition which feeds into the national Converge Challenge competition;
• in 2016-17, launch an award for Enterprise as part of the Edinburgh Award, which recognises the extra-curricular achievements of Edinburgh students;
• in 2016-17, expand the recognition of students’ entrepreneurial activities through the Student Led Individually Created Courses programme, a curriculum innovation to award academic credit for students’ experiences and development;
• deliver the Business school EClub, a networking group that links UoE entrepreneurs with the wider business community through regular events and presentations;
• deliver initiatives through the Informatics Ventures program for Scotland, which will include the IVTuesday Talk series (streamed live to other institutions across Scotland), and the Engage Invest Exploit program which carries out mentoring and prepares companies to pitch for investment and engage with investors at the annual EIE Investor Conference, the largest held in Scotland.

Priority 3: Encouraging mobility of staff between business and universities

In all engagements with companies the University, through its industry engagement company ERI, will proactively determine the appetite for both inward (company to university) and outward (university to company) secondments. Opportunities for engaging in secondment exercises will be promoted to relevant staff, students, Schools, Colleges and University units. ERI will participate in helping structure new initiatives within the University designed to encourage all forms of secondment activity. We will drive change management in UoE’s industry engagement with an aggressive drive to open our ‘walls’ and cooperate and collaborate widely.

We will develop targeted initiatives supporting outward mobility of staff. This includes the Edinburgh Connections programme, initially aimed at offering staff the opportunity to participate in a work based placement with other employers or sector bodies and agencies in support of curriculum development. This programme, piloted since 2014, is aiming to expand, and to cover other areas of mobility.

Industry days, run through our Informatics based Centres for Doctoral Training, will be focussed on building the relationships and understanding needed for staff to move between industry partners and UoE. These run annually with around 30 companies at each of 3 events. These also contribute to priority 5 as they promote connections with both large partners and local SMES, as well as supporting our relationship with the Edinburgh technology Start-up cluster.

Priority 4: Set out breadth and depth of professional development available to Universities Enterprise and Innovation Officers; Identify any gaps.

UoE staff are currently strong participants in training events such as those run by Praxis Unico. We will create, through ERI, a new post charged with establishing a rolling sequence of professional training courses that will be open to all UoE staff and selected externals with links to UoE. Training will focus on aspects of industrial engagement such as relationship selling, the role of IP, and negotiation. The aim will be for at least one training course per calendar quarter with at least 12 people attending per course.

Priority 5: Enhance skills for effective collaboration within the academic and SME business base

Through ERI, the University will establish bi-monthly meetings with Interface to inform Interface of initiatives starting within UoE that are designed to include SME interactions, and to learn of any emerging thematic area where the SME community are looking to access skills and knowledge. By enhancing understanding of the SME market ‘pull’, ERI can improve current activities such as its AIMday events, and consider how to construct new activities attractive to SMES.

Priority 6: Examine partners current strategies/initiatives, and the government actions, to ascertain how to best support the transition from transactional to strategic relationships between universities and business/industry sectors

UoE is actively developing its strategy and implementation for industry engagement. A critical component of our approach will be to ensure that company interactions are strategic with multiple
projects and interactions running at any point in time to ensure relationships are retained, mutual value is optimised and we move away from the traditional “single transaction” form of industry engagement. We will manage our relationships with companies through a life-cycle from contact and clarification of joint interests, to development, to growth and retention. Our aim will be to ensure we have propositions, high-level staff skills (and training) and state-of-the-art CRM systems in place to support this approach. This is a long term change programme encompassing people, processes and systems. The ability to develop from a transactional opportunity to a broader strategic one will be part of professional re-training within a revamped ERI-led approach to industry engagement as described under priority 4.

**Priority 7: Implement enhanced template contract arrangements for SMEs in all Scottish universities**

UoE contributes to the Contracts Templates Sub-group of the Research and Commercialisation Directors’ Group involving all Scottish universities. The goal is to have six standard templates agreed for Scotland-wide use and readily accessible on a publicised website by end December 2016.

**Priority 8: Implement ‘post project referral protocol’ in all individual HEIs and Innovation Centres**

ERI is developing follow up protocols encouraging companies to have follow on engagements with other industry facing units and the outstanding business, data services and research capabilities within UoE.

Our Salesforce CRM will be rolled out across ERI and used to analyse the wide range of engagements of these companies, as well as milestone achievements by the projects and companies themselves.

**Priority 9: The development of a Framework for monitoring and evaluation of the success of the new UIF approach**

There should be a consistent sector wide framework measuring outcomes, as far as possible against existing metrics. Any new framework should justify the value of any new metrics over and above existing metrics such as REF and the existing HEBCl and KTG metrics. We are happy to cooperate in this process but wish to avoid a proliferation of metrics and overhead activity associated with data collection and analysis.

**Priority 10: Development of the structures and mechanisms to give more ambitious and effective connection of universities to social and cultural beneficiaries**

The University already has broad and deep connectivity to social and cultural beneficiaries and we will continue to develop these, including:

- through our MoUs with various cultural institutions, such as the Zoo, National Museum of Scotland and National Galleries of Scotland;
- by providing speakers, content, workshops and premises for the annual festivals in Edinburgh, and through science and other festivals across Scotland;
- providing cultural opportunities open to the public, such as lectures, exhibitions, concerts, Doors Open Day, and our own museums and galleries such as the Talbot Rice Gallery and Anatomy Museum. We are re-developing St Cecilia’s Hall which will contribute to tourism and the cultural life of the city;
- developing further the concept of using the University and city as a Living Lab partnership to investigate social problems and help develop solutions through research and practice;
- creating opportunities to promote novel and sector-leading modes of digital community engagement through our global online presence and the outreach of the Office of Lifelong Learning, which reaches 12,000 learners annually;
- recognising, through the Edinburgh Award, students’ leadership and skills learnt through involvement in non-credit bearing community engagement initiatives such as volunteering.

Our Community Engagement Plan, which we are currently developing, will give a shape and focus to these and other activities.

**Priority 11: Development of the structures and mechanisms to give more effective support for Scottish businesses to trade on a European and global stage**
UoE will participate in several EU supported programmes such as the ‘Fortissimo Market Place’ – an initiative to establish a vehicle whereby companies can get access to high performance computing. We will promote these mechanisms through ERI and other channels including working with Interface.

ERI representatives will support International Office events in key partner countries and cities such as India and San Francisco. Through such events new contacts will be made that will be relevant to Scottish businesses, and UoE through ERI will ensure that the information is made available.

Through Engage Invest Exploit we will support platforms such as EIE-London, an annual showcase for A-round level growth companies, which will attract a large Venture Capital and Corporate Capital audience.

We work with SDI and UKTI, through areas such as Informatics and the Bioquarter, on Inward Investment presentations, at a rate of around 6 per year.

**Priority 12: Fundamentally re-thinking the innovation support ecosystem of Scotland.**

The University is extremely active in this area as highlighted at the introduction to this document. Specifically: (i) we are re-energising our commercialisation company ERI Ltd; (ii) we are the founders of the Enterprise Campus model; (iii) we have launched Sunergos, a commercialisation catalyst that aims to transforms innovation and disruptive research into real returns for entrepreneurs and partners by developing venture funding and supporting the attraction, circulation and regional retention of seasoned management for the new companies created; and (iv) we are participating the BIS Science and Innovation Audit processes to attract further external funding to the region. Our industry engagement propositions seek to exploit the synergy between the University, students, companies, talented management and venture finance in driving innovation and economic growth.

There is an increasing recognition that industrial engagement is optimised by recognising thematically strong areas which have a strategic fit with both the academic and industrial domains: engagement needs to be more than a series of discrete tactical projects. We will be working to distil propositions that meet this criterion. This approach will establish new forms of partnership.

We will participate in Scotland-wide discussions on the shape of support from organisations such as Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Funding Council through RCDG, Universities Scotland and our own engagements with these organisations, and dialogue with the Industry Liaison Groups.