SFC University Innovation Fund Submission 2017-18

GCU’s Strategy 2020 sets out the University’s vision, as the University for the Common Good, to deliver social benefit and impact through education, research and innovation. Our Strategy drives our priorities and ambitions to 2020 and informs the development of our Outcome Agreement with the SFC. Our 2020 Research Strategy seeks to address the United Nation’s multiple Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, ensure prosperity for all and protect the planet. We address the Sustainable Development Goals via three societal challenges of Inclusive Societies, Healthy Lives and Sustainable Environments. These are reinforced by a clear focus on enhancing our social and economic impact through a range of mechanisms from student enterprise, volunteering, scholarship funding, business start-up, outreach, environmental initiatives and collaboration with Scottish SMEs via Interface. We welcome the continuation of the platform grant of £250k pa to maintain essential Knowledge Exchange and innovation capacity. In line with SFC guidance, GCU will use the platform grant to support maintenance of core staff and activities which drive our applied research, knowledge exchange, consultancy, and continuous professional development activities, and protecting and developing inventions and promoting innovation. We can demonstrate the matched funding commitment of £250k from existing staff costs incurred across the wider enterprise agenda that meets with SFC requirements. For the Outcome Grant element of the UIF, we have set out our plans under the agreed national priorities indicating where our activities make a contribution to the wider Scottish innovation and enterprise landscape and reinforce and support delivery of UIF Outcomes for 2017-20.

1. Enhance skills for effective collaboration within the academic and SME business base (UIF Outcome One; Demand Stimulation). The University via the Glasgow School for Business and Society is developing an application for the award of the Small Business Charter and our School of Engineering and Built Environment has a strong reputation for KTP and work with SMEs in the Manufacturing and Engineering sector. The review process assesses our engagement with business across a range of activities. The University also provides CREDO staff development workshops and regular KTP seminars (in conjunction with the West of Scotland KTP Centre) for researchers to improve effective knowledge transfer and to achieve impact from their research by building relationships and networks with the local business community. The Research and Enterprise office provides professional skills development and support in engagement with the private sector. Our School for Work Based Education, the first of its kind in Scotland, provides an innovative mechanism for assisting academic staff in the delivery of professional development and capacity building in Business Academy partnerships in Scotland (for example with Scottish and Southern Energy) and internationally in South Africa. The strategic approach in this area allows experienced staff to mentor staff new to this type of activity. Specific provision for staff development and skills enhancement is included in the annual performance development process for all staff. Action: Achieve small business charter award, increase number of KTPs with SMEs and provide training for staff on business engagement.

2. 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 (UIF Outcome Two; Simplification/Commercialisation). We anticipate that strategic dialogues with business/industry will be conducted on a sector wide basis; for example via the Innovation Centres who have appropriate structures for this purpose. GCU is involved in 5 of the Innovation Centres and secured two Innovation Centre projects in 2016-17 (CENSIS and DHI) worth £87,719. Each institution will also have its own strategic dialogues, so we would be able to provide examples of these also within the remit of the UIF supported activity going forward. As part of this process we will examine areas where the level of repeat business would suggest the need to go beyond existing transactional arrangements. The University has engaged with the Head of Sector Engagement at Interface, fully supports the new Sector approach to engaging with businesses and would wish to play its part in supporting innovation developments in Scotland if it assisted the development of improved strategic relationships. Action: To support HE sector level strategic dialogues with industry groups and Scottish Enterprise/SDI and other national forums and mechanisms such as the Innovation Centre and NCUB to develop stronger business development activities.

3. Implement enhanced template contract arrangements for SMEs in all Scottish universities (UIF Outcome Two; Simplification/Commercialisation). The University is fully committed to this objective and has for many years supported the provision of Lambert standard template agreements for HEI business interactions. Our Research and
Enterprise office is involved in the on-going development of pan-Scotland contract templates that can be used for this purpose via the University Scotland RCDG group. There are technical issues to resolve that will require a significant amount of work to be carried out in order that robust but usable templates are developed that can be adopted by all HEIs. A process of consultation with business groups will be required to establish priorities across the range of contract models in use and to ensure that any such agreements are accessible to business users in order to gain endorsement for the approach. Standard sector agreed contracts will be used by GCU and offered to companies as with the advantages of making interactions simple, consistent and minimising legal costs. **Action:** We will use the UIF to support our contribution to the necessary sector-wide collaboration needed to deliver template agreements offered in common use in AY2017-20.

4. **Implement “post-project referral protocol” in all individual HEIs and Innovation Centres (UIF Outcome Two; Simplification/Commercialisation).** The University is involved in 5 Innovation Centres and in the work sourced through Interface. We are committed to the proposal for a post-project referral protocol to be used in ascertaining the customer experience from interactions with a view to demonstrating effectiveness of collaboration and in stimulating demand for further HEI sector engagement as appropriate to client needs. We will actively contribute to the implementation of this initiative via the RCDG group of the University Scotland Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, Interface and other forums as appropriate. **Action:** The University is committed to contributing to the development of an appropriate sector wide protocol and implementing it during AY2017-20.

5. **Encouraging mobility of staff between business and universities (UIF Outcome Three; Simplification/Greater Innovation).** The University has a very significant role to play in the development of skills in partnerships with the public private and voluntary sectors. For example we have a very strong relationship with the NHS across the fields of Nursing and Professions Allied to Medicine, and through our role as the only provider of Vision Sciences in Scotland. A significant component of that relationship includes secondments of NHS staff to the University as Clinical Academics and similarly GCU staff to the NHS. We also deliver a professional doctorate qualification which allows individuals in permanent employment outside the HE sector to engage in higher degree level project work relevant to their workplace. Research project collaborations also offer the opportunity for staff from outside HE to work on activities with a common purpose together establishing relationships over the longer term. We also provide students to work on company projects for educational reasons as well as on commissioned work. However, we know from experience that that SMEs are specifically assisted by the creation of new staff posts as a result of participating in KTP projects, which is something that GCU has prioritised strategically and has contributed to significantly over many years most recently supporting the 2017 year of Heritage. The appointment of a student to a KTP associate position is a very effective way of developing graduate skills directly relevant to the workplace but also ensures that academic staff spend time being involved in and advising on project activities of direct benefit to business partners. GCU participates fully in SFC Innovation vouchers and follow on/student placement vouchers. **Action:** The University will support businesses via the KTP scheme with the placement of associates working on client premises (recent examples being with the Scottish Tourism Alliance/Historic Scotland and Stream Communications) and the UIF will be used to support the institutional infrastructure to increase KTP activity in the future and for which each University Department now has specific targets. We will continue to employ Visiting Industry Professors and sector experts as adjunct academics to facilitate start-up through our UHatch incubator and encourage Enterprise and Entrepreneurship across all of our academic Schools.

6. **Set out breadth and depth of professional development available to University Enterprise & Innovation officers and identify any gaps (UIF Outcome Three; Simplification / Greater Innovation).** The University obtained the HR Excellence in Research Award in 2013 and has just passed the two year review stage. We intend to build on our work in this area. While the primary focus for our research staff development framework (CREDO) has been the enhancement of academic research excellence and impact, University support staff are also included within the ambit of our internal provision. We fully support the union of AURIL and PRAXISUNICO and we continue to draw on the courses provided by AURIL/PRAXIS UNICO, and ARMA, The Leadership Foundation, and make use of the collective expertise available through the Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum. We will participate in a sector wide approach if that was found to be most efficient and appropriate. We currently assess the professional development needs of all staff (both academic and professional) via our annual appraisal process and align our staff development provision to with the achievement of institutional objectives. **Action:** To commit to carrying out an analysis of skill gaps and to actively promote relevant development opportunities to KE support staff as appropriate.
7. Promote entrepreneurial opportunities to students during their studies (UIF Outcome Four; Entrepreneurialism). The University has a Strategy for Learning in place to support the development of entrepreneurial and employability skills and content of programmes. Specifically this addresses the following goals:

- Equipping all students with the ability to develop an entrepreneurial attitude to their studies, their career planning and graduate employment via core modules of study.
- Embedding an understanding of being entrepreneurial as a way of thinking and behaving that drives innovation, creativity and ethical, sustainable change in the economy and society as a whole.
- Encouraging the development of an ‘entrepreneurial mind-set’ which includes generic personal attributes such as initiative, independent thinking, problem solving, creativity, general commercial awareness, networking, identifying business opportunities.
- For all disciplines at UG level, core and high-profile modules which explicitly address employability and foster an entrepreneurial attitude throughout the programme of study, including consideration of responsible management/leadership and professional ethics (amended as appropriate in the case of direct entry students articulating on to any programme).
- Opportunities for every student for entrepreneurial development through core and/or co-curricular activities such as volunteering, internships, and authentic projects either employer- or community-based and for such activity to count towards a degree award. Such activities are highlighted in our Annual Enterprise Fair, Enterprise Funding availability (through our partnership Santander Universities) and in our bi-monthly Enterprise lunch workshops showcasing successful GCU entrepreneurs and Enterprise Mentors.

In most Undergraduate teaching across all our schools students are typically required to complete 60 credits in the area of Enterprise, Entrepreneurialism and Employability. Students also undertake real-world projects engaging with a variety of external employers and communities, in the social, private and public sectors. We are focussed on developing high quality opportunities for students to develop skills relevant to the global workplace. Our aim is to foster personal development through collaborative participation and engagement to improve the transferability of skills into the workplace environment and to create value in both economic and social contexts. Our goal is that every student will exit our programmes with practical experience of working in external organisations, a nascent network of local and national/international peers and sufficiently adaptable to transfer skills across different contexts that they will encounter in the on-going development of their careers. We are committed to graduate enterprise via our U-Hatch enterprise incubator which has over 25 graduate businesses with a collective turnover of £1.2 million, developing GCU graduates in Global Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. We are active participants in vehicles such as; Enterprise Campus, Converge Challenge, and the Enterprise Value challenge (via trading projects). In 2017 the University will host the International Entrepreneurial Educators Conference welcoming over 350 international delegates allowing us to showcase our work on social enterprise and entrepreneurialism. GCU has been designated a Changemaker Campus by Ashoka U, a global network of universities and colleges, one of only 29 worldwide and the first in Scotland. It reflects the University’s global leadership in promoting social innovation in its teaching and research. **Action:** UIF resources will be used to better co-ordinate, support and expand all such initiatives and promote the achievements and outcomes as exemplars and case study materials for future student cohorts and graduate start-up companies.

8. Increase development opportunities for and uptake of entrepreneurial training and education, and develop institutions’ practitioner-led entrepreneurial training (UIF Outcome Four; Entrepreneurialism). Entrepreneurial training and education is mainstreamed in existing delivery. The area where we can increase our contribution is to go beyond current awareness raising and educational delivery to generate increased entrepreneurial activity arising from the student population. U-Hatch is GCU’s recently launched incubator space, designed to assist entrepreneurial students, graduates and staff members. This initiative is closely aligned with the objectives of other external networking and support facilities including Entrepreneurial Spark, the Scottish Institute for Enterprise, the Santander Universities network, and Converge Challenge. Examples of recent activities include training in the development of pitching skills for aspiring entrepreneurs and access to for example the Santander Universities 60 second pitch awards and enterprise portal. GCU has also developed a suite of transferrable skills training for postgraduate students delivered via our award winning Graduate School and via the sector wide Scottish Researcher Development Policy Forum which supports KT initiatives. The Research Innovation and Enterprise Office provides training and support to academic staff engaged in the development and exploitation of innovation arising from research utilising external providers where appropriate to supplement internal provision. GCU also contributes to the Enterprise Campus initiative to support postgraduate students who want to set up their own business initiative. Our award winning Graduate School interacts with Enterprise campus using the west of Scotland hub based at Strathclyde. **Action:** UIF resources will more closely align the delivery of enterprise training from undergraduate modules and research student training to U-Hatch enterprise outcomes. This will include enhancing staff development using internal and external practitioner expertise and facilitating the delivery of greater impact in this area and engaging proactively via cross sector mechanisms.
9. **Development of the structures and mechanisms to give more effective support for Scottish businesses to trade on a European and global stage (UIF Outcome 5; International).** The University now has a truly international footprint and is well positioned to help Scottish businesses do trade in Europe and beyond. We use our Europe Office to source partners for SMEs in projects involving larger European businesses and in Erasmus exchange programmes, for example; KNEEMO, NoPILLS, ENHANCE, AFOOTPRINT. Indeed, we seek to grow international profile through partnerships, transnational education and export of our social and commercial expertise internationally. Our research activity is networked globally and may be able to effect introductions to HE partners in other countries to help companies make contacts overseas. Our bases in GCU London and GCU New York, and our successful international partnerships in Oman, Bangladesh, and Africa can be used as a point of contact/facilitation/local knowledge for outreach by Scottish companies. **Action:** Work with key public and private sector agencies to build trade and investment linkages via our London and New York campuses.

10. **The Development of the structures and mechanisms to give more ambitious and effective connection of universities to social and cultural beneficiaries (UIF Outcome 6; Inclusive Growth and Social Impact).** The University has adopted the concept of the Common Good at the heart of the 2020 strategy and consequently social justice is embedded within our research strategy. We have also developed an MSc in Social Business and Microfinance which is unique in Scotland. The University has specific enthusiasm for promoting and developing the social enterprise agenda and has established research units that contribute to this agenda such as the Women in Scotland’s Economy group, our Yunus Centre and the Centre for Climate Justice with its specific focus on overseas beneficiaries. We are seeing the creation of a number of social enterprises and commercial high growth companies via our U-Hatch incubator initiative. We are well positioned to make a contribution that is both distinctive in Scotland and aligned with our strategy. **Action:** GCU as a University for the Common Good to make significant contribution to the development of an agenda addressing engagement with the third sector, local communities (via the Caledonian Academy) and through our scholarship and development programmes.

11. **The development of a Framework for monitoring and evaluation of the success of the new UIF approach (UIF Outcome 7; equality and diversity).** Equality and diversity are a core part of GCU’s culture, and the principles of our Equality Act 2010 duties are supported across all of our functions and activities. Our commitment to providing an inclusive and responsive working and learning environment where staff and other stakeholders are free from discrimination would form a central part of our UIF activities. This commitment is already apparent in our work around Inclusive Societies and would be further enhanced by ensuring that the equality and diversity impact of our use of the UIF and intended outcomes is considered at key stages of implementation. This will include an equality impact assessment of the UIF related activities, as well as ensuring that staff and other stakeholders have an awareness of their roles and responsibilities in advancing equality and diversity. This commitment will be built into relevant action plans and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. **Action:** Embed equality impact assessment into UIF activities, and include staff awareness and engagement in advancing equality and diversity in action planning.

12. **Fundamentally re-thinking the innovation support ecosystem of Scotland. (UIF Outcome 6; Inclusive Growth and Social Impact)** A broad definition of innovation to include not only the private sector but also the public and voluntary sectors would contribute to inclusive growth and social impact. We are willing to take the lead on a more inclusive definition of innovation involving; social innovation, inclusive growth and social impact and looking at how that landscape may develop in a different way to that assumed for the traditional business-technology transfer focused model. In terms of innovation, our biggest potential of scale lies in the continued creation of student entrepreneurs during and on completion of their programmes. Social Innovation and Public Policy is one of GCU’s identified research themes across the University with a clear focus on overseas beneficiaries. We are seeing inclusive and responsive working and learning environment where staff and other stakeholders are free from discrimination would form a central part of our UIF activities. This commitment is already apparent in our work around Inclusive Societies and would be further enhanced by ensuring that the equality and diversity impact of our use of the UIF and intended outcomes is considered at key stages of implementation. This will include an equality impact assessment of the UIF related activities, as well as ensuring that staff and other stakeholders have an awareness of their roles and responsibilities in advancing equality and diversity. This commitment will be built into relevant action plans and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. **Action:** Embed equality impact assessment into UIF activities, and include staff awareness and engagement in advancing equality and diversity in action planning.