

Terms of Reference

SFC RKEC - University Innovation Fund Review Group

The Scottish Funding Council's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) wishes to undertake a light touch review of the University Innovation Fund (UIF) approach and a more fundamental review of the funding model to ensure the SFC's forward strategy for the UIF is fit for the future.

Purpose

The UIF Review Group has been established to support RKEC review the new UIF approach; a key component of SFC's strategy for supporting greater innovation in the economy. It will do this by providing a more in-depth review of progress and a wider ranging examination of issues of importance to the UIF approach than is possible within RKEC's scheduled discussions. This will inform RKEC's own deliberations and recommendations to the Council's Board.

This is a review of the new UIF approach. It will not be an examination of the economic impact of Scotland's universities – this is out of scope¹.

Remit

The UIF Review Group will make recommendations on three key themes:

- Overall UIF approach (alignment with Scottish Government strategy, links to wider² UK strategy, outcomes, collaborative framework, alignment with SFC outcome agreement cycles etc.);
- Measurement (our metrics, visibility within HEIs);
- The UIF funding model.

This will include:

- examine progress on the delivery of the UIF approach against the original vision;
- identify areas for improvement and develop proposals for an enhanced UIF approach;

¹ However, the review will make reference to economic indicators from SFC KE metrics and HE-BCI.

² For example, the UIF currently supports universities to respond to UK Research and Innovation funding opportunities such as the UK Industrial Strategy.

- reviewing our current measurements against the original UIF vision/objectives and metrics including learning from others such as Research England's Knowledge Exchange Framework (metrics);
- undertake a fundamental review of the funding allocation model to ensure good fit with the proposed enhanced UIF approach;
- ensure that all aspects of the review reflect the SFC's commitment to preventing discrimination and advancing equality and diversity; and
- provide regular updates (via Review Group Chair) to the Chair of SFC RKEC on progress with the review.

In undertaking all of the above tasks, the Review Group will take cognisance of policy developments at the Scotland and UK level and report to SFC RKEC on its findings and recommendations.

Timescale

The review will begin in May 2019 and conclude by summer 2020 when SFC's Board is expected to agree the remit for the AY2021/2022 Outcome Agreement guidance. It will consist of three phases:

- Phase one (May to August 2019): a light touch review of the UIF model and recommendations for improvement using available evidence, alignment with updated Scottish Government priorities and strategy, and learning from other developments/good practice.
- Phase two (August 2019 to December 2019): a fundamental review of the funding model to ensure good fit with the proposed enhanced UIF model.
- Phase three (January to June 2020): consultation with the sector on the proposed changes and revised funding model. The Review Group will make final recommendations to RKEC following the consultation exercise.

Outcomes

The expected outcomes will be an enhanced UIF strategy and funding allocation model that is aligned to this. The review will not make recommendations on the overall UIF budget but will make reference to and record its observations on the available UIF budget over the review period, in relation to what has been achieved by the sector.

Confidentiality

The ethos of the UIF Review Group is to be open and transparent, however, some aspects of the Group's work will inform policy development and the exploration of new ideas, which may or may not lead to a change in policy. In such cases, meeting papers and discussion will be withheld from publication under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Section 30 - Prejudicial to effective conduct of public affairs.

Membership

The Review Group will be chaired by SFC Board member Douglas Mundie with membership from SFC RKEC and other partner organisations. The Group will be supported by staff from the SFC executive.

The membership will be:

Morven Cameron (SFC RKEC, Highlands and Islands Enterprise)

Dr Sean Fielding, (Chair of PraxisAuril and University of Exeter)

Dr Alicia Greated (SFC RKEC and Heriot-Watt University)

Dr Siobhán Jordan (SFC RKEC and Interface)

Douglas Mundie (SFC Board & RKEC Member)[Chair]

Alison Munro (SFC RKEC and Scottish Enterprise)

Dr Pieter van de Graaf (Scottish Government)

Dr Gillian Murray (US RKEC and Heriot-Watt University)

Professor Neil Simco (US RKEC and University of the Highlands and Islands)

Observer:

David Lott, Universities Scotland (or substitute)

Secretariat:

Gary Bannon, SFC

Fiona Bates, SFC

Keith McDonald, SFC