

## Consultation on changes to our funding policies for knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I)

Organisation	University of the West of Scotland
<p><b>Question 1: how should the outcomes framework currently in place for UIF evolve to ensure University KEIF is structured to deliver on its renewed purpose and has the right strategic drivers and incentives in place?</b></p>	<p>Innovation is at the heart of economic transformation so there is a need to simplify the strategy landscape and focus on a single relevant strategy that is refreshed in 3-year cycles and significantly reviewed every 6 years. For example, why is there a need to have separate strategies for economic transformation and innovation? Once this is achieved, we should align outcomes (via each institutions' outcome agreement) directly with this single unifying strategy.</p> <p>However, HEIs differ in terms of their student populations, knowledge domains and place-making, and so we should enable each HEI to define its own outcomes and objectives as applicable to each institution and each institution can be held absolutely accountable with a bespoke set of indicators.</p> <p>Unnecessary complexity and duplication have to be avoided to enable knowledge exchange partners to focus their efforts on delivering outcomes rather than navigating different landscapes.</p> <p>Further, UIF is significantly smaller than KE&amp;I funding in the rest of the UK, therefore what we can achieve with this level of funding cannot match what is achieved elsewhere in the UK. We need to establish a larger platform grant for each institution in order for them to leverage additional funding.</p> <p>We would propose an equal share of the KEIF to each institution with a tiered match-funding level which would provide a more equitable distribution of KEIF, with simpler allocation model.</p>
<p><b>Question 2: what are your views on the current UIF collaborative framework, how could this evolve and be sustained to support further good practice and purposeful collaboration? Is there a role for the Knowledge Exchange Concordat in this context or more generally?</b></p>	<p>First and foremost, a Collaborative Framework enables collaboration by design and it has to promote diversity in HE sector supported by a more stable, substantial baseline funding through increased platform grant to enable an equitable baseline provision. It should encourage institutions to learn from each other in a best practice sharing model.</p> <p>The Knowledge Exchange Concordat is a useful tool to inform and enhance KE culture, practice and process, while recognising and celebrating the diversity and heterogeneity of each individual HEI. It also provides the common baseline for knowledge exchange across the UK.</p>

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	<p>The current process around the UIF Outcome Agreements is burdensome, and it does not encourage reflection or continuous improvement at an institutional nor sector level. Learning from the peer evaluation process within the Knowledge Exchange Concordat, SFC should consider how we could adopt a similar model to support further good practice and purposeful collaboration within the KEIF framework.</p>
<p><b>Question 3: what are your views on how the impact and outcomes of University KEIF should be measured, including the role of metrics or other indicators in any future funding and allocation model? We would welcome views on current or potential good practice regarding measuring net-zero KE&amp;I activities and outcomes.</b></p>	<p>Using metrics as a funding allocation model is flawed as this approach fails to recognise the sector diversity and place-making requirements as they relate to each institution and place where they are located. It would simply create the same problem encountered with the previous Knowledge Transfer Grant where the metrics did not act as a useful proxy for contributions to national First and foremost, a Collaborative Framework enables collaboration by design and it has to promote diversity in HE sector supported by a more stable, substantial baseline funding through increased platform grant to enable an equitable baseline provision. It should encourage institutions to learn from each other in a best practice sharing model.</p> <p>The Knowledge Exchange Concordat is a useful tool to inform and enhance KE culture, practice and process, while recognising and celebrating the diversity and heterogeneity of each individual HEI. It also provides the common baseline for knowledge exchange across the UK.</p> <p>The current process around the UIF Outcome Agreements is burdensome, and it does not encourage reflection or continuous improvement at an institutional nor sector level. Learning from the peer evaluation process within the Knowledge Exchange Concordat, SFC should consider how we could adopt a similar model to support further good practice and purposeful collaboration within the KEIF framework.</p> <p>However, an evaluation framework should be developed that can help in the assessment on the progress of KEI in each institutional outcome agreement. This would respect the fact that each HEI in Scotland is unique and should have the flexibility to agree metrics in negotiation with the funding council which are robust and are aligned to the national strategies, but reflective of the distinctive impact from each institution.</p>

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	The current baseline funding of UIF is insufficient as evidenced by the fact that some Universities need to supplement it with additional funding such as Impact Acceleration Accounts but not all HEIs are eligible for this. We propose the platform grant is substantially increased, and to scale the co-funding requirement with the size of institution. Specifically an increase platform to £750k with a tiered level of co-funding of £250k, £500k or £750k.
<b>Question 4: how could the University KEIF, with Interface, help support collaboration with colleges, collectively supporting Scotland's SME base to be more innovative?</b>	Modern Universities collectively have identified that they would be willing and able to pilot a model where they lead engagement with colleges on KE&I on behalf of regions in a hub and spoke model. In this model, the universities would work with their local colleges to form interdisciplinary knowledge exchange teams in response to Interface enquiries. In addition and considering their existing relationships with SMEs, they would help promote knowledge exchange opportunities.
<b>Question 5: how could core capacity funding (College KEIF) best support colleges to be effective agents of KE&amp;I? We would particularly like to learn from colleges directly on what KE&amp;I means to them and where capacity is needed to deliver this effectively, which could include building on current practice.</b>	In our view, College KEIF would represent a useful mechanism to further boost collaboration with HEIs. Working collaboratively with their local HEI, Colleges can develop a joined-up model that supports the lifecycle of KE&I especially for local SMEs.
<b>Question 6: we would welcome views on what would be an appropriate period for SFC to run the first cycle of College KEIF before formally reviewing it and establishing a mature model for future years.</b>	We propose a period of six years before formal review to reflect the need to stability and planning for each HEI.
<b>Question 7: we would welcome views on the potential value of using College KEIF to create frameworks for collaboration and sharing of good practice across the colleges, and with universities.</b>	We would support this approach and suggest that Modern Universities lead this activity by sharing the cultural benefits of implementing the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.
<b>Question 8: our review recommended that we co-design the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy with colleges and universities. We would welcome views on what is proposed in this consultation, including potential opportunities, weaknesses and gaps.</b>	Regional collaboration in establishing the Entrepreneurial Campus should respect the diversity of each HEI and should lead to best practice sharing among all HEIs and not just those with the most mature programme portfolio.

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	Part of the rationale of the proposal for an increased platform grant to each HEI is to address the problem of seed investment into student start-ups and some funding should be ring-fenced as part of KEIF for this purpose.
<b>Question 9: we would welcome evidence of current practice in Scotland (or elsewhere) to ensure we have an up-to-date picture of what is working well and upon which the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy could build on.</b>	<p>Our pandemic-driven response to the economic recovery needs of our students and communities has moved our student innovation plans forward significantly, placing student innovation at the heart of a UWS innovation ecosystem which will evolve and grow as it develops. It includes 9 key components (Educators, Funders, Kickstart, Investors, Incubators, Programmes, Policy Makers, Networks/Events and Advisors), each with a set of corresponding elements, many of which are already in place within UWS or wider across Scotland.</p> <p>UWS has invested a great deal of resource into developing this new student innovation ecosystem which is presented in a new virtual incubation service About   StudentInnovationHub (i3uws.co.uk)</p> <p>We have also invested in the development of Demola Scotland to create an international innovation experience for our students which will have a beneficial impact on Scottish companies' confidence to innovate for the future Demola Scotland.</p>
<b>Question 10: the Review recommended that the university and college sectors join SFC in repositioning Innovation Centres (ICs) as stable long-term infrastructure investments. We would welcome views on the details of the proposed 'repositioning' as described in this consultation, including any opportunities, weaknesses and gaps.</b>	<p>We believe that all infrastructure investment should be part of a cohesive ecosystem so that interdisciplinary and multi-party opportunities can be developed.</p> <p>Innovation Centres, Interface and the next generation of research pools should be repositioned to facilitate and lead collaborations between universities, and with external organisations (brokerage/matchmaking). Such repositioning will mobilise a more coherent KE&amp;I ecosystem, with impacts measurable beyond Innovation Centres/Interface, and often years later; accountability of Innovation Centres/Interface needs to be modified to accommodate this.</p>
<b>Question 11: we would welcome views on how we could best strengthen the Innovation Centres' relationship with universities and colleges, ensuring</b>	Innovation Centres should align better with both the Place agenda and the Equality/Diversity agenda. This would extend their work beyond the limited number of HEIs they currently work with. The

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<b>added value, sense of partnership and collaboration, avoiding duplication of effort etc. This would include opportunities for alignment and partnership with Interface, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and other relevant agencies and organisations.</b>	funding arrangements offered by Innovation Centres should be more consistent to prevent confusion in the industry.
<b>Question 12: we would welcome views on potential areas of future opportunity where the Innovation Centre model could help deliver outcomes for Scotland.</b>	Innovation Centres can be catalysts in the innovation of future skills development in Scottish Industry by becoming active partners and promoters in programmes such as Demola Scotland. Innovation Centres can enable brokerage/match-making between universities, industry, and other partners to focus on agreed common goals of the whole KE&I ecosystem (e.g. Scottish Government Inward Investment Plan, and SFC Missions agenda).
<b>Question 13: we would welcome views on strengthening Interface's relationship with universities and colleges, ensuring added value, sense of partnership and collaboration, avoiding duplication of effort etc. This would include opportunities for alignment and partnership with Innovation Centres, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and other relevant agencies and organisations.</b>	We should avoid the trap for Interface of pursuing quantity of engagements with Industry over quality. Specifically, there should be heightened emphasis on them enabling long term and valuable relationships with HEIs.  Interface could focus on under-represented themes (e.g. those not covered by Innovation Centres), and facilitate constructive partnering in the themes aligned to Scottish and UK Innovation Strategies, and SFC Missions.
<b>Question 14: if you have direct experience of working with Interface, we would welcome suggestions for evolutions to its operating model to help it develop even more effective support for productive relationships between businesses and our universities and colleges.</b>	Interface could mirror the approach of Converge Challenge by placing resource into HEIs to get to know better how to capitalise on their strengths.
<b>Question 15: we would welcome general views, based on direct experience of the Innovation</b>	We recommend broadening the scope of IVs so that more companies can take advantage of them and raising the value so that more HEIs can use them (the current value means that HEIs lose money when they use IVs which is a disincentive).

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<b>Voucher scheme, on how it could evolve and better support our system for KE&amp;I.</b>	
<b>Question 16: we would welcome views on widening the scope of Innovation Vouchers to encompass wider KE activity but retaining the key objective of using them as a means to promote first time collaborations and encourage longer-term relationships.</b>	We support this goal and suggest that the scope could be extended to skills development. We believe a multi-stage approach to Innovation Vouchers would support scalability and continuous collaboration between partners (i.e. Stage 1: Smaller “Starting Innovation Vouchers” for first time collaborations (scope as wide as possible); Stage 2: Larger “Intermediate Innovation Vouchers” to build on the established collaboration in Stage 1 (scope: slightly narrower scope, focusing on developing solutions); and Stage 3: Large “Advanced Innovation Vouchers” to deliver specific high-TRL solutions).
<b>Question 17: how could colleges and universities help SFC understand, or monitor longitudinally, how many Innovation Vouchers have led to ongoing relationships? Are there cross sectoral digital solutions to this which can help us better understand the outcome we hope to achieve?</b>	Interface has made great progress on embedding its CRM into its operation. Customer Satisfaction surveys for both company and HEI should be captured and analysed on an ongoing basis to facilitate this goal.
<b>Question 18: From experience of mission-led approaches elsewhere, how would you advise SFC to use its resources and investments to facilitate such activity in support of Scottish Government objectives for economic transformation?</b>	We support a mission-led approach but are concerned about alignment of these at a Scottish, UK and International (UN SDGs) level. In alignment with UN SDGs, missions should be longer-term, clearly defined and distinguishable from shorter-term challenges. It is vital that HEIs are not conflicted in their priorities due to mis alignment of these levels and therefore HEIs should be able to agree with the SFC through the outcome agreement mechanism on their main goals in relation to the identified challenges and missions.
<b>Question 19: We would welcome views on the breadth of the role a KE&amp;I Advisory Board could play and what stakeholder membership would give us the most effective support for SFC’s role in the ecosystem.</b>	We recommend that the board is entirely industry-led with a significant SME and start-up representation.
<b>We may publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses themselves. Published responses may be attributed to an organisation where this information has been</b>	Publish information and excerpts from this survey response INCLUDING the organisation name.

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<p><b>provided but will not contain personal data. When providing a response in an individual capacity, published responses will be anonymised. Please confirm whether or not you agree to your response being included in any potential publication.</b></p>	
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