

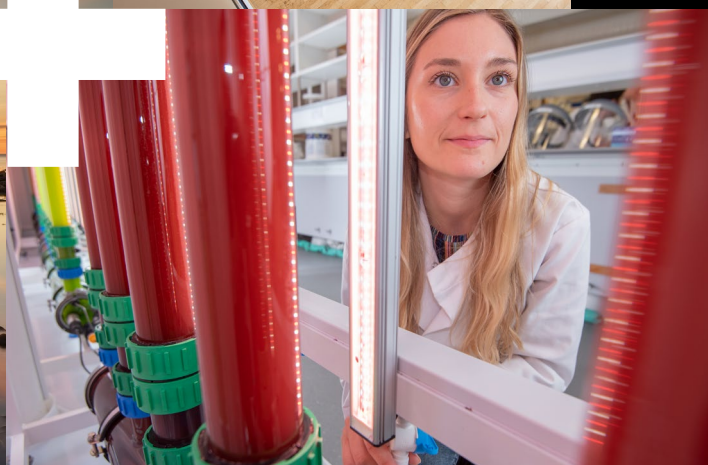
Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy



2025-2030

Knowledge Exchange (KE)
connects **research** and
scholarship to **businesses**,
public agencies and
communities.

We work collaboratively to
address the unique challenges
and opportunities in the region.



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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (KE&I) capacity

An aerial photograph of a coastal area. The top half shows turquoise water meeting a sandy beach. The bottom half shows a grassy, rocky coastline with a small white umbrella and a small building on the grass.

Section A Overview

1. Institutional context

UHI is a regionally based, fully tertiary institution covering the entirety of the Highlands and Islands, Perthshire and Moray (approximately two-thirds of Scotland's landmass). By fully tertiary, we mean that we are the only Scottish institution that provides further education, higher education, research and knowledge exchange. The provision of this full suite of academic activities provides greater power to achieve societal and economic change. In addition, we are fully integrated into communities across our regions, with 48 campuses and learning centres spread across this important Scottish region. Our mission, as articulated in our **Strategic Plan 2030**, focuses on delivering prosperity to our regions.

UHI's mission is to have
a transformational
impact on the people,
communities and
economy of our regions.

UHI's transformative impact will be achieved through a combination of policy advocacy and thought leadership, whereby we leverage academic expertise, research findings, policy analysis and the lived experiences of community members to produce compelling place and evidence-based policy recommendations, sustainable development practices and innovative stakeholder engagement strategies. UHI is focused on facilitating multi-sectoral impacts in the region, which are in turn aligned to the policy programmes of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and the four broad themes of the National Innovation Strategy (NIS), and global programmes and themes such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UHI's greatest strengths in knowledge exchange and innovation, and its greatest potential for impact, innovation and entrepreneurial advancement, lie in marine and aquaculture, environmental conservation, cultural heritage conservation, and health and wellbeing.

UHI's unique selling point is its reach and depth in serving some of the UK's most remote communities through our further and higher education programmes. Our mission is closely aligned with wellbeing economy ambitions to ensure that the communities we serve thrive across economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions.



2. Overview of strategic ambitions

Our ambition is to embed research and knowledge exchange within a tertiary education ecosystem, aligned with the university's mission of achieving transformational change across our regions. This challenge and impact focused approach will identify key challenges and opportunities by economic and industrial sector, and then seek to identify how our further education, higher education, research and knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) can operate in a coordinated and strategic manner (and in partnership with other institutional stakeholders), to achieve the greatest impact. This means embedding our knowledge exchange and innovation in what we are terming integrated tertiary sector plans. In the context of this ecosystem the KE&I Strategy will be delivered in two phases.



Phase one (2024–25 to 2025–26)

Refresh our Research and Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Strategy

We will amalgamate and refresh our current Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF)-funded knowledge exchange sector groups to bring greater institutional focus on identified challenges and opportunities, improve alignment with further education (FE) and higher education (HE) strengths and needs, and enhance regional relevance for our research and knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) activities.

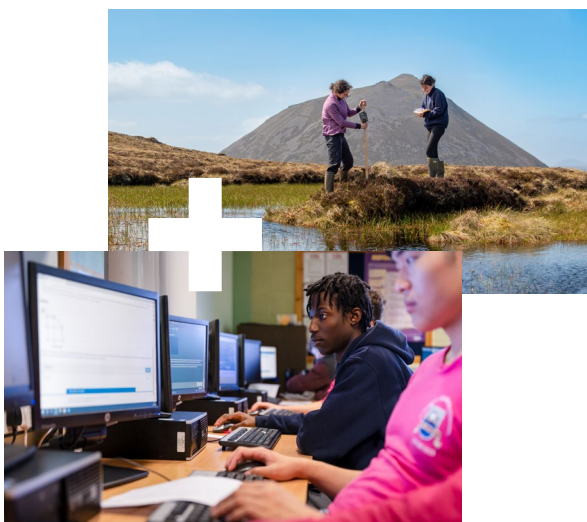
We will also review our KE&I and wider commercialisation and business capacity building and training portfolio for staff and students to ensure that they align with UHI's institutional priorities. This will be done in collaboration with regional KE&I and other business sector partners, such as Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Converge, Interface, TechScaler, Elevator, and the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (North of Scotland).

We will also develop a proposal to the Scottish Government for a shared tech transfer office with other Scottish higher education institutions (HEIs) to enhance support for staff and students' spinouts, which we are currently unable to support with our existing resources as a single higher education institution.

Phase two (2026–27 to 2029–30)

Our portfolio of knowledge exchange sector groups will have been refreshed, with the addition of new groups focusing on hydrogen and the space industry. We will further develop the infrastructure for KE&I across our academic partners through the tertiary education ecosystem, which will support all KE&I activities, including a responsive, market-led, KE&I-focused continuing professional development (CPD) programme to meet regional needs.

In addition, our KE&I activities across both FE and HE curricula will be integrated into our Entrepreneurial Campus blueprint programme, embedding entrepreneurialism at all levels of study, with a focus on supporting KE&I activities in general (mapped against KEIF metrics) and staff and student start-ups.



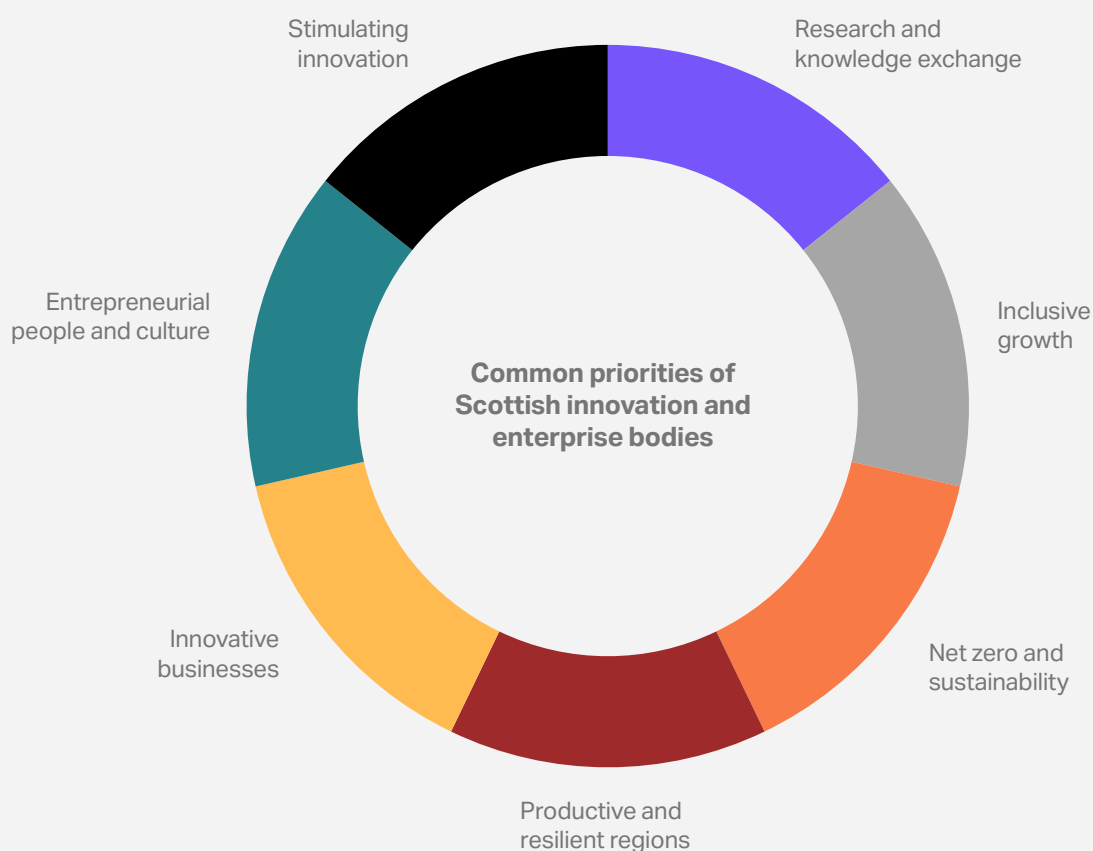
These two phases will be embedded within our fully tertiary, sector-focused Research and KE Strategy (2025–30). The latter will be a first for Scotland and it will showcase UHI's uniqueness as Scotland's only fully tertiary university, articulated across seven regional hubs.

3. Alignment to Scottish Government priorities. Overview of strategic ambitions

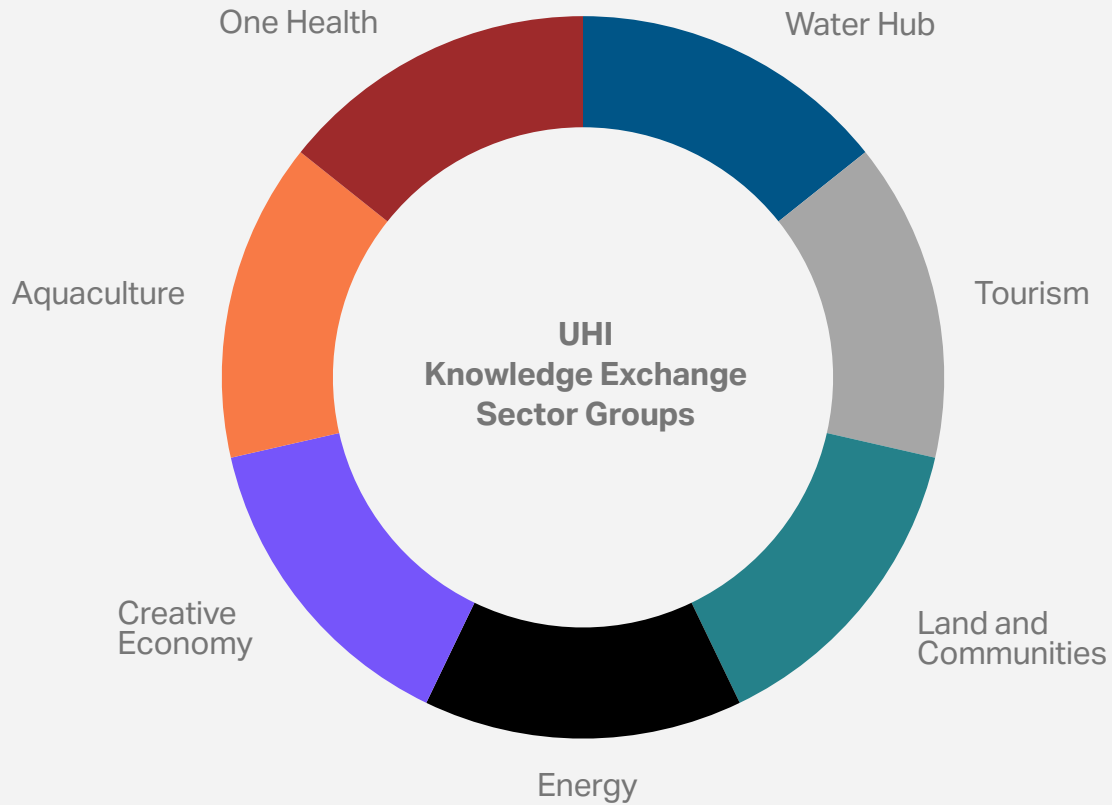
UHI is in the process of developing a fully tertiary approach to everything we do, including research and knowledge exchange. It is through our tertiarity that we will achieve the focus required to respond to Scotland's innovation priorities and those of enterprise bodies operating in our regions. UHI will achieve this alignment by ensuring our KE&I activities and our education and skills development programmes respond to the key challenges and opportunities of our regions.

We will achieve this ambition through ensuring that three of our emergent strategic programmes, namely UHI's tertiary Research and KE Strategy, our sector-focused Tertiary Curriculum Development Strategy, and our new Regional Economic Strategy, reflect national priorities such as net zero, health and wellbeing, business development and support for creative, cultural and heritage industries. These developments provide the institutional infrastructure that will further enable our challenge-focused responsiveness to regional and national opportunities. Skills development and CPD will become increasingly significant areas of intersection between all three of our emergent strategies.

Common priorities in Scotland's innovation and enterprise landscape



UHI's Knowledge Exchange Sector Groups (KESGs)



The additionality that Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF) funding provides for UHI will be greatly enhanced in the context of this fully tertiary education ecosystem, with the majority of KEIF funding supporting our Knowledge Exchange Sector Groups (KESGs) and the UHI Challenge Fund, which KESGs are able to competitively apply for to undertake sector-focused knowledge exchange and innovation projects. The KESG offer will be enhanced through further calibrating their focus and activities to map onto KEIF metrics, which are derived from the Scottish Government's Innovation Strategy priorities, and reference the priorities of UK Research and Innovation, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and Scottish Enterprise.

This will be achieved in partnership with key regional agencies (public sector, industry and third sector organisations), to articulate our regional commitment by embedding a highly responsive FE and HE innovation ecosystem in our regions, aligned with our new regional economic development plan.

Section B

Knowledge exchange and innovation capacity **(KE&I)**

4. Platform grant

UHI will make an estimated in-kind contribution of 63.44 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff not directly funded by the Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF) who support KE&I (see section 6 below on our plans for strategically coordinating this significant staff resource with knowledge exchange (KE) responsibilities).

The Platform Grant will be deployed to bring further focus, coordination and dynamism to our sector-focused approach, which has been designed to enhance our capacity for developing innovative, entrepreneurial solutions in partnership with our key stakeholders and in response to regional challenges.

Improved performance will be achieved through refreshing our portfolio of Platform Grant-funded Knowledge Exchange Sector Groups (KESGs) to enhance their regional relevance, for example, in interdisciplinary environmental and health challenges, and green skills development in support of net zero. We will also develop a new knowledge exchange sector group in support of the hydrogen and space industries in our regions.

We will continue with our regionally focused economic development support, bespoke and generic KE&I training, KE&I continuing professional development (CPD) provision, and through the coordination of resources across the UHI partnership, especially UHI's KEIF-funded Challenge Fund to support the transition of projects into innovation vouchers, start-ups, knowledge transfer partnerships, and participation in business and innovation competitions.

In addition, commercialisation capacity will be enhanced through the proposed development of a proposal to the Scottish Government for a shared technology transfer office, which UHI will develop with other Scottish higher education institutions to support staff and student spinouts (see section 7).



The Platform Grant will be deployed to bring further focus, coordination and dynamism to our sector-focused approach, which has been designed to enhance our capacity for developing innovative, entrepreneurial solutions in partnership with our key stakeholders and in response to regional challenges.



5. Overall capacity for knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I)

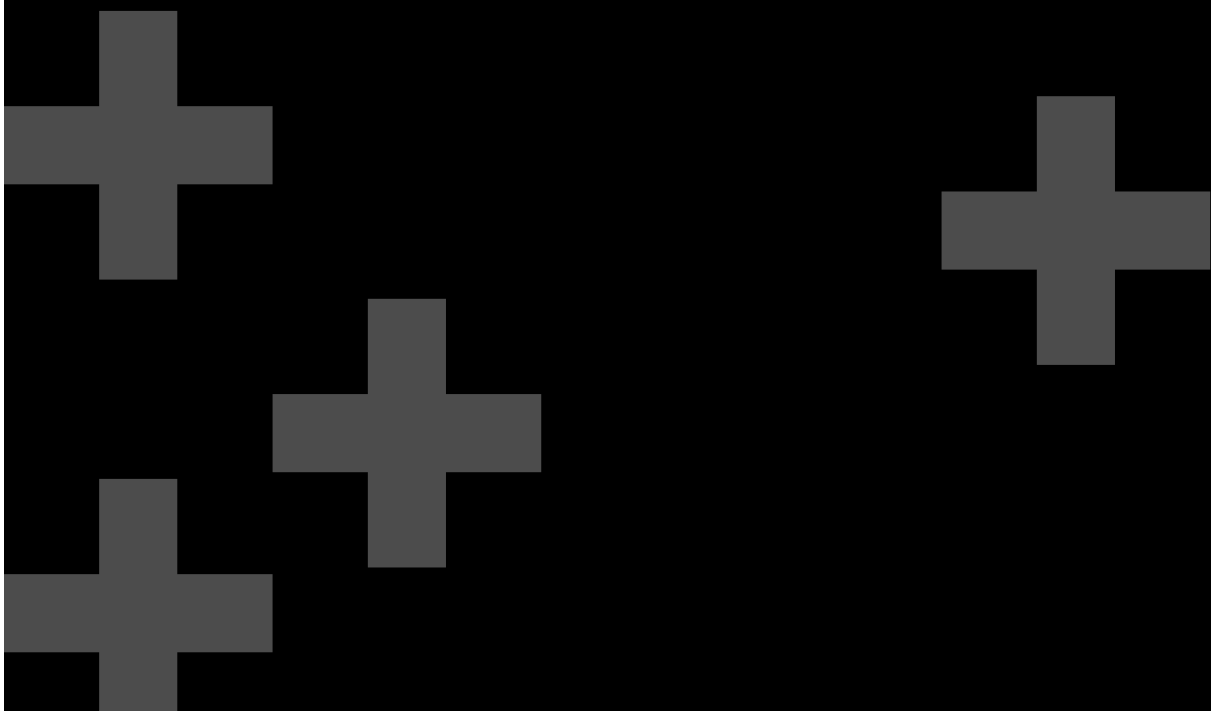
There are 8.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff across the partnership directly supported by the Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF). The remaining KEIF funding is focused directly on knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) activities. In addition, an estimated 63.44 FTE staff not directly funded by KEIF support KE&I across the partnership, servicing our regional activities.

We have plans, as recorded in our additional key performance indicators (KPIs), to bring greater coordination to this considerable KE&I and enterprise staff resource (both directly and not directly funded by KEIF) at UHI. This will include ensuring that each tertiary sector's plan draws together our curriculum, our research and KE, and our new regional economic development plans into an integrated set of activities designed to maximise economic and societal impact within that specific sector context.

Once the common sectors are identified, academic and professional services colleagues, both those directly supported by KEIF and those not, will be organised into cross-partnership sectoral hubs. These will include our knowledge exchange sector groups, curriculum developers and economic development specialists. These hubs will bring a fully tertiary orientation to responding to regional priorities, challenges and opportunities.

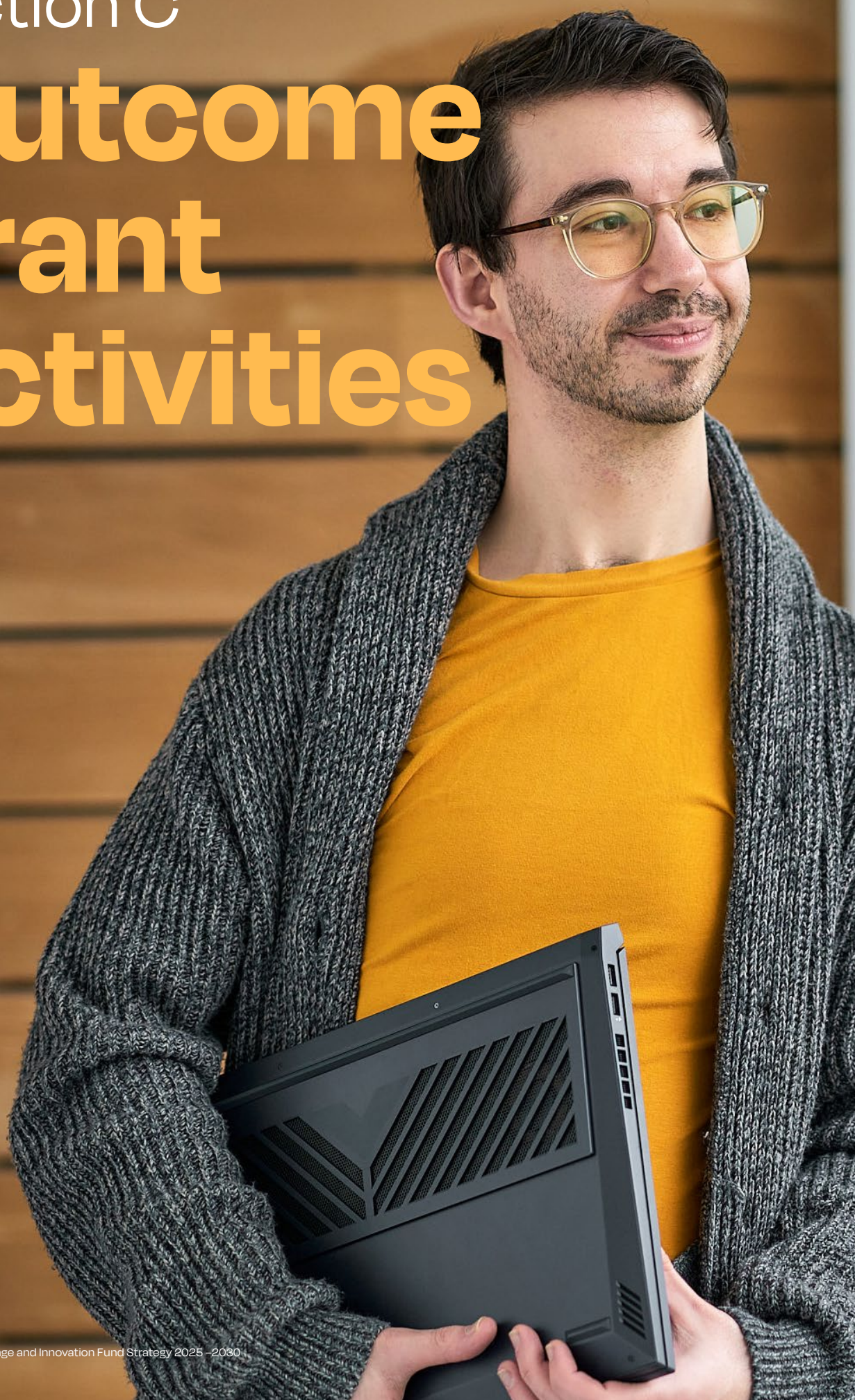


**The remaining
KEIF funding is
focused directly
on knowledge
exchange and
innovation
activities**



Section C

Outcome grant activities



6. Knowledge exchange metric activity

Knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) has a key role to play in UHI achieving our mission of having a transformative impact on our regions. Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF) funding will provide crucial investment to enable UHI to continue to play to our strengths and improve, where possible, the areas needing further development to enable us to address the challenges and opportunities that exist in our regions.

UHI will continue to deploy KEIF funding in a distributed, sector-focused way, through our interdisciplinary knowledge exchange sector groups (KESGs). The KESGs and sectoral hubs will exemplify place-based collaboration with key (public, private and voluntary) sector stakeholders working in our regions. It is through these partnerships and the mutual goals that underpin them, that we translate research, practice, and knowledge into beneficial outcomes for our communities.

The tertiary education ecosystem that will support our KE&I activities is, and increasingly will be, an outward-looking and industry-indexed ecosystem in terms of its responsiveness to the key challenges facing our regions, for example, population attraction and retention; renewable and affordable energy; marine aquaculture; digital technology and connectivity; agricultural technology and food innovation; sustainable tourism and hospitality; health and wellbeing; environmental conservation; and cultural heritage preservation. These key challenges map onto the Scottish Government's research and innovation priorities, which focus on fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable wellbeing economy by driving research, collaboration, and entrepreneurship.

UHI is well placed to respond to these priorities through being fully tertiary in everything we do, including KE&I. We will be able to engage even more deeply with the communities and businesses that share spaces and places with our 40 learning centres across our regions.

In terms of KEIF metrics, UHI's KE&I Strategy is designed to deliver moderate growth across enterprise schemes, research and continuing professional development (CPD). We will also redouble our efforts to reestablish our levels of income for consultancy and outreach activities that were previously higher than current levels, with those activities failing to recover sufficiently post-COVID. The more obvious shift in focus for UHI is in staff and student start-ups and spinouts. There are promising signs of staff-related activities in these areas (since submission on 31 January 2025). However, higher education student spinouts and start-ups are a major priority for us, requiring a shift in focus and strategic investment including developing a proposal to the Scottish Government for sharing key resources and expertise with other higher education institutions, resources UHI currently does not have (see section 7 below).

To achieve this, our KE&I Strategy will be developed in tandem with enabling frameworks designed to foster collaboration, drive impactful outcomes, and ensure strategic priorities are effectively implemented across our academic partners, (see section 6 above). Through so doing, each interdisciplinary knowledge exchange sector group will have its own targets and key performance indicators (KPIs), which will be aligned with UHI institutional KE&I KPIs which will, in turn, be aligned with KEIF metrics.

The KEIF metrics and their weightings, and the four years of actual data included in Annex B, have contributed to an institutional impetus on the part of UHI to introduce new ways of working across our academic partners. Some of these new ways of working have been included in our additional KPIs in Annex B, for example, forging closer collaboration with KE&I-engaged colleagues across our federated structure through our tertiary education ecosystem. Through so doing, KE&I will become an integral pillar in UHI's strategic regional responses.



7. Graduate start-ups and spinouts/entrepreneurial support

Our ambitions for enhancing the entrepreneurial support that UHI currently provides for its staff and students will be achieved through developing a Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (KE&I) Strategy that brings greater vision and alignment across KE&I activities and support provided by UHI academic partners. This will include developing an internal ecosystem dedicated to responding to knowledge exchange (KE), innovation and enterprise opportunities, articulated with our existing and future sector groups, such as those focused on the space industry and hydrogen. It will also align with our sector-focused Curriculum Development Strategy and our Entrepreneurial Campus blueprint to ensure greater coordination across the UHI partnership. This will help maximise outcomes across our campuses and regional hubs and enable closer alignment with national entrepreneurial programmes, for example, Converge, Skillfluence and Elevator, to ensure that student-led activities and projects have enhanced chances of progressing to start-up, attracting investment and raising their profile.

UHI has the potential to improve opportunities for transitioning KE&I activities into commercial opportunities, such as staff and student spinouts and start-ups. The support we currently offer could be enhanced to respond better to the needs and priorities that have been introduced by the Scottish Funding Council for these activities. Our ambition is to develop a balanced approach suitable to UHI's resources and levels of expertise, with a stronger focus on student and staff start-ups rather than spinouts, which are riskier and more resource intensive.

To support staff and student start-ups, we plan to stimulate more activity in this area through the implementation and delivery of bespoke training programmes and by developing accessible toolkits for developing start-ups. These training events will include 'train the trainer' programmes to create an ecosystem of support across our academic partners and stakeholder organisations in the region. There are already early signs that this support is working. Since our original submission, we are now confident that we are likely to support three staff start-ups or spinouts in key regionally important domains. All three projects are being supported through the Research to Value programme.



In terms of student start-ups and spinouts, we believe there is significant potential for growth. Although we are successful in supporting further education (FE) student start-ups and spinouts, this success has not yet been mirrored in higher education (HE) students. This is a strategic area for UHI to develop. However, UHI cannot adequately meet these ambitions as a single HE institution. As such, our KE ambitions will be realised through the co-development of an application to the Scottish Government for support for a shared technology transfer office (TTO) with four Scottish HE institutions: Glasgow School of Art, Queen Margaret University, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Abertay University. Alongside this shared TTO, the university is also engaging with the Challenge Group on their Impact Venture Pilot application to the ecosystem fund.

These opportunities, applications and collaborations have the potential to provide the step-change that UHI desires in terms of enabling our staff and students with commercialising ambitions to be successful.

Our HE student start-up and spinout forecasts reflect the results that we think we can achieve with the support of the shared TTO (refer to refer to the start-up and spinout spreadsheet).



These opportunities, applications and collaborations have the potential to provide the step-change that UHI desires in terms of enabling our staff and students with commercialising ambitions to be successful.

An aerial photograph of a river with rapids, surrounded by dense forest with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, orange, and red. Several kayakers are visible on the river. The text 'Section D' is overlaid in white at the top left, and 'Wider knowledge exchange and innovation activities' is overlaid in large orange letters across the center.

Section D

Wider knowledge exchange and innovation activities

8. Wider societal impact

UHI is more than a traditional university. We pride ourselves on delivering further education (FE) and higher education (HE) across 40 learning centres, engaging 36,000 students. Our institutional philosophy is based on our founding values of creating sustainable education for students of all ages and abilities. We are passionate about the regions we serve, and we demonstrate our commitment to them by providing an excellent student experience and offering flexible, supported learning across all levels of study.

This ethos of serving our communities is embedded in the development of our fully tertiary research and knowledge exchange (KE) strategy, tertiary curriculum strategy, and economic development strategy, which in combination are designed to enable UHI to have a transformational impact on the people, communities and economies of our regions.

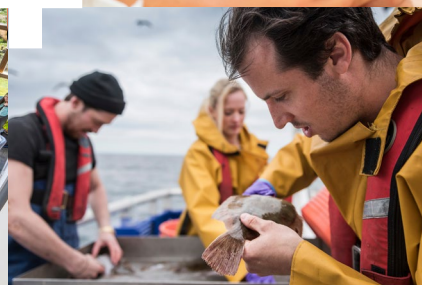
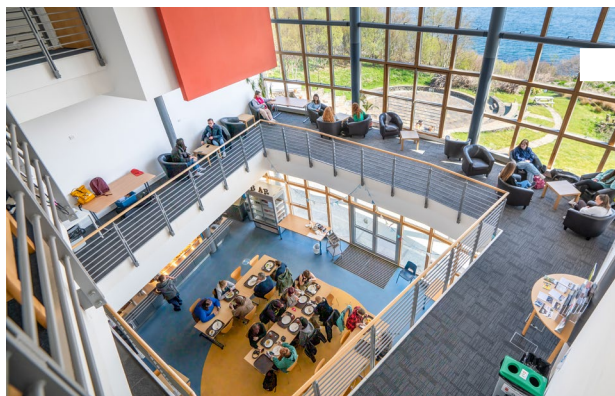
Our non-income-generating Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF) funded knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) activities make an important contribution to the social and economic value of our regions by raising awareness and aspirations among our students, staff and the wider communities we serve, for and about the development of innovative solutions that respond to the social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges that exist in our regions.

Through also investing in non-income-generating KE&I activities, we support wider societal impacts by stimulating, upstreaming and catalysing an entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial mindset among our staff, students and the wider communities across our regions. This will be achieved through developing an enhanced public engagement offer across the partnership, in collaboration with the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE).

In partnership with NCCPE, we will collaborate with business, industry, the public sector and third-sector regional stakeholders to introduce sectoral stakeholder events designed to co-create the fertile conditions for stimulating new market opportunities, promoting enhanced service delivery and business productivity, and leading to job creation. In doing so, we contribute to both social and economic development in our regions.

To respond to these opportunities, in phase one of our KE&I Strategy we will provide UHI's knowledge exchange sector groups (KESGs) with additional funding for public engagement and business engagement activities such as events, promotions, meetings, and a challenge or seedcorn fund.

It is UHI's ambition to embed an entrepreneurial mindset across our staff and student bodies, reinforcing the already existing Highlands and Islands mentality of opportunistic innovation and inventiveness in response to living in a challenging environment, as well as supporting the Gaelic language within our KE activities where possible.



9. Collaboration

Industry bodies

Business Gateway
Green Freeport
Chambers of Commerce

Local authorities

Highland Council
Island councils

UHI's
key regional
partners

Community organisations

Development trusts
Cultural heritage groups
Marine and land conservation

Sector bodies

Highlands and Islands
Enterprise (HIE)
Scottish Enterprise
NHS Highland



We will facilitate the emergence of a more cohesive approach to supporting knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) in the context of our tertiary education ecosystem across UHI's regions through the following four areas of activity:

1. Enhance our KE&I expertise and increase the visibility of, and accessibility to, our KE&I expertise

This will be achieved through close collaboration with key enterprise agencies (Highlands and Islands Enterprise in particular), the Scottish Government, business networks, Converge, Interface and others. We will achieve this through UHI becoming a hub and catalyst for KE&I activities across its higher education (HE) and further education (FE) provision.

This will involve working closely with these enterprise agencies to:

- (i) build the entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial capacity and capability of our staff and students.
- (ii) enhance businesses and other organisations access to the KE&I expertise across UHI by bringing all our knowledge exchange (KE) and entrepreneurial activities under a KE&I virtual hub and associated internal SharePoint sites, alongside a new user-friendly, publicly available website, which will be comprehensively linked to a new research and KE website.

2. Increase our engagement with KE&I sectoral knowledge

At the Scottish and UK government level, we will make greater strategic use of our enterprise partners' sectoral knowledge to promote increased innovation in the economies of UHI's regions. We will achieve this by working in partnership with key enterprise agencies such as Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Interface, and Converge. Our focus will be to drive significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to staff, students, and businesses through these collaborative networks.

3. Build the ecosystem to achieve UHI's transformative mission in its regions

We are confident that our knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) ambitions, achieved in partnership with our enterprise partners, will deliver the transformative impact UHI desires to have on the people, communities, and economies of our regions. We will realise these ambitions by bringing greater focus to our research and knowledge activities, guided by a challenge-based and regional approach.

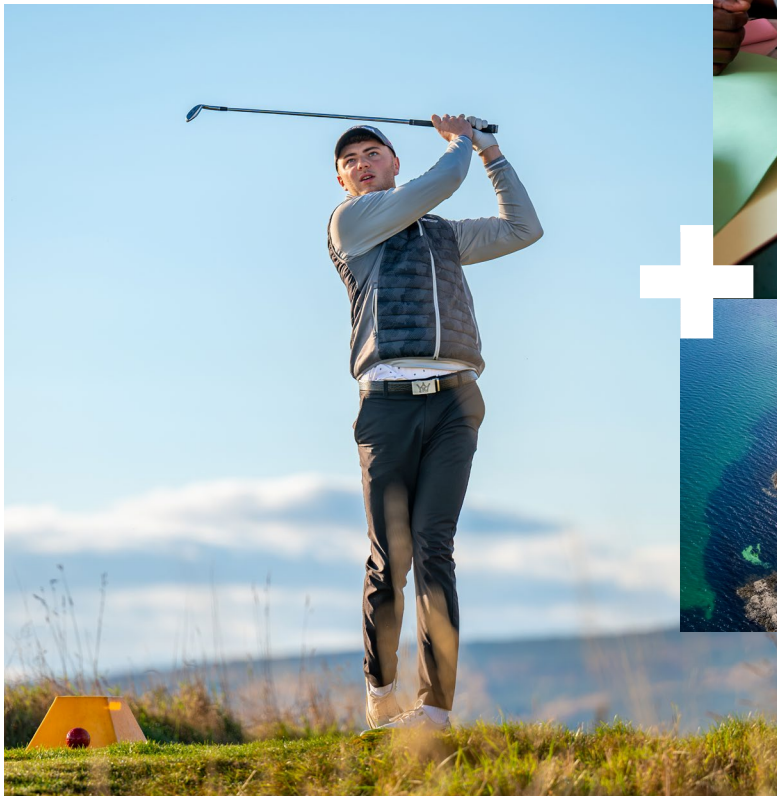
This approach will be underpinned by a wellbeing economics ethos dedicated to bringing prosperity, hope, and ambition in line with the Scottish Government's inclusive growth programme. These activities will be supported in collaboration with our enterprise agencies and industry partners, aligned with the economic opportunities and challenges within our regions.

4. Become even more international in our KE&I ambitions

Although UHI is deeply rooted in its regions, we are keen to highlight our current international reach and further enhance our international research and KE&I activities. To achieve this, we will work in partnership with Scottish Development International, Connected Scotland, Scotland Europa, and others to develop a transregional approach to collaboration. This will involve building relationships with higher education institutions and enterprise agencies operating in regions around the world facing similar challenges and opportunities to those found in UHI's regions.

10. Regional approaches

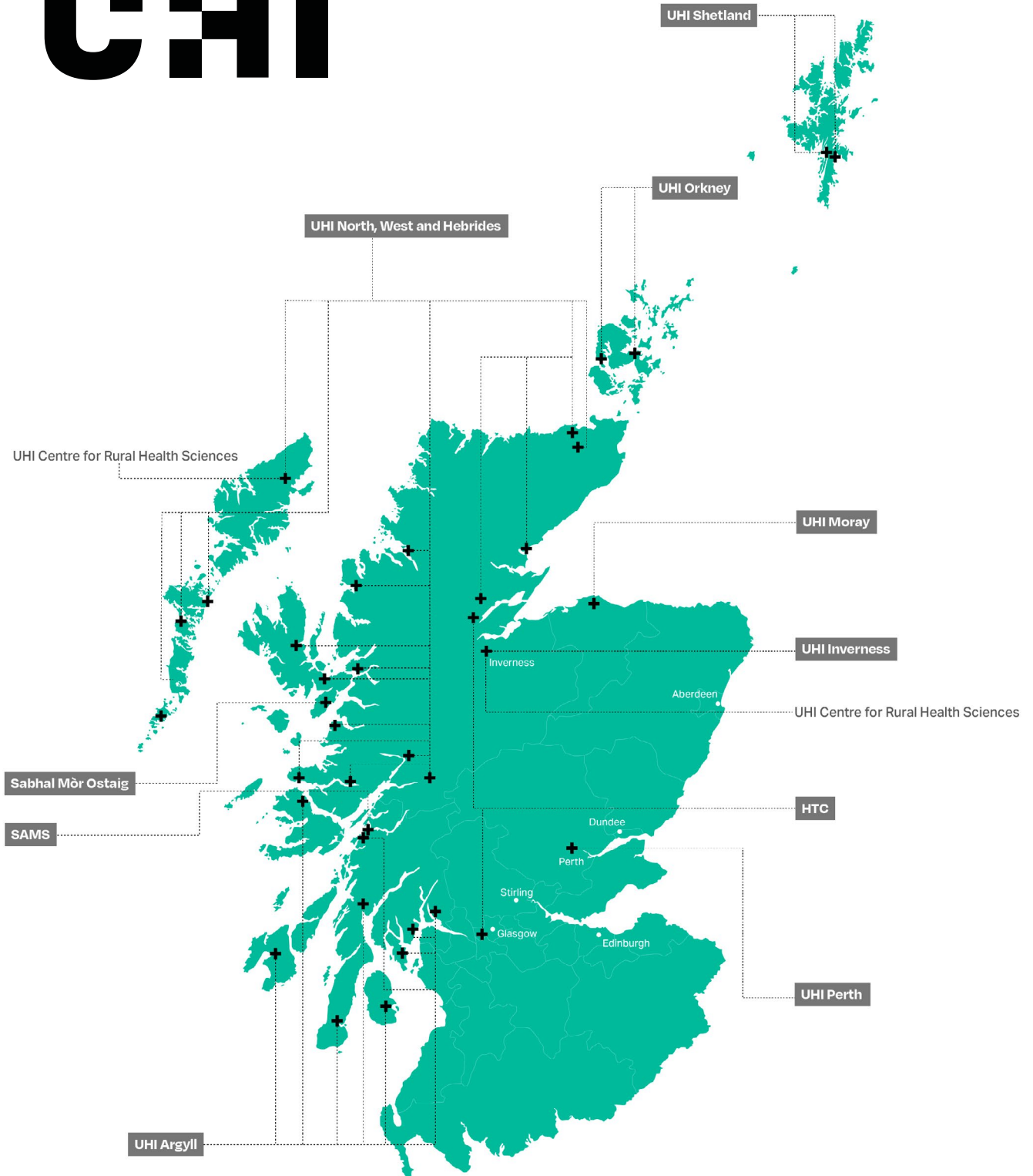
UHI is a regional university. We serve some of the remotest communities in the UK through our provision of further education (FE) and higher education (HE) across 40 campuses in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire. For UHI learning means more, and knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) also means more. UHI's research and KE&I priorities have been developed to respond to the social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities of our regions (and the global community through our championing of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals). UHI is not just an anchor institution in the singular, place-based sense of, for example, serving the needs of a city and its hinterland. UHI serves a vast territory across its regions and is, with very few exceptions, the only FE and HE provider in some of the UK's most remote areas.



UHI's major KE&I contribution is in the promotion of a collaborative, challenge-based, solution-focused ethos in our regions. UHI's primary regional responsibility in terms of KE&I is to co-create place-based innovative solutions to the challenges facing our regions that will deliver real-world benefits for the communities we serve. Our primary ambition is to create an ecosystem of innovation that supports communities and businesses in our region to thrive.

Our fully tertiary Research and KE Strategy is being developed in parallel with our tertiary sector-focused curriculum plan and our new economic development plan. These will become a mutually reinforcing, sector-focused core at the heart of UHI.

UHI



Section E

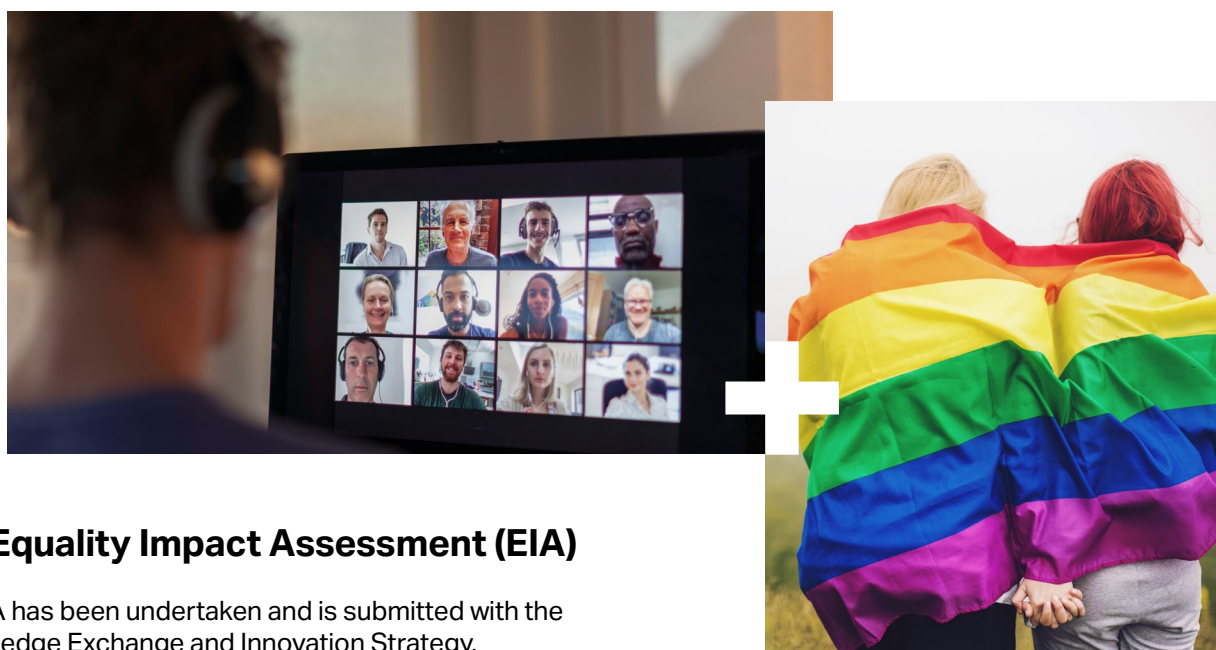
Equality, diversity and inclusion

EDI

11. Embedding and promoting EDI

UHI will implement the following strategies to ensure our Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF) funded activities embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) principles. We will:

1. Incorporate EDI principles into the design and delivery of our knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) programme of activities.
2. Ensure that mentors, trainers and speakers included in our wider KE&I programme of activities are representative in terms of gender, and diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.
3. Ensure that in-person and online training programmes and facilities are accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities.
4. Offer bias awareness training and resources to all frontline KE&I academic and professional services staff delivering our programme of activities. This will include the assessment of applications for support and funding, competitions and awards, and engagement with the public at events.
5. Establish support networks and mentorship programmes that specifically focus on supporting individuals from under-represented groups to participate in our programme of activities.
6. Implement mechanisms to monitor the inclusivity of programmes, gather feedback from participants, and continuously improve our activities based on the feedback received.
7. Engage with diverse communities both within and outside of UHI to promote participation in KE&I activities, including collaboration with community organisations to reach a wider pool of participants.
8. Promote inclusive entrepreneurship by providing support and resources specifically tailored to entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs from under-represented groups, including those who use Scottish Gaelic, Scots language and other regional dialects appropriate to our institution.
9. Recognise and celebrate diversity within our innovation and entrepreneurship activities, including showcasing success stories from individuals from diverse backgrounds to inspire others.



12. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA has been undertaken and is submitted with the Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Strategy.

Section F

Knowledge exchange and innovation culture



13. Embedding and promoting EDI

We will ensure a positive knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) ecosystem through:

1. Engaging with key enterprise agency partners to introduce KE&I networking events, pitch competitions and conferences to connect staff and student entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs with potential investors, collaborators, customers and communities.
2. Enhancing the coordination of academic and professional services staff with KE&I responsibilities through sector-focused knowledge exchange and curriculum development hubs supporting both further education (FE) and higher education (HE) KE&I activities across the partnership.
3. Refreshing our Knowledge Exchange Sector Groups to ensure their remits are aligned with Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF) metrics.
4. Promoting an entrepreneurial mindset among staff and students by offering entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship courses, workshops and networking opportunities to cultivate a culture of innovation.
5. Offering seed funding, grants and other funding opportunities to support early-stage ventures and research projects with commercial potential.
6. Providing guidance and support for researchers and entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs in managing intellectual property rights and navigating the open innovation and commercialisation process.
7. Offering mentorship, coaching and advisory support from experienced entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, industry experts and alumni to support start-ups.
8. Recognising and celebrating successful knowledge exchange, enterprise and commercialisation initiatives to inspire and motivate others to pursue similar paths.
9. Assessing the impact of our KEIF-funded programme and continuously improving our KE&I offer to support knowledge exchange, enterprise growth and commercialisation across UHI's regions.

14. Knowledge Exchange Concordat principles

UHI confirms its commitment to the eight guiding principles of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.



Enquiries

Any enquiries or requests for further information related to this strategy should be directed to:

KT@uhi.ac.uk

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement as set out in the Equality Act (2010) and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. It may be used as evidence for cases referred for further investigation for compliance and governance issues.

This document has four sections.
Please supply the required information for each section.

Section 1 EIA information

1. **Department/section**
Knowledge Exchange and Innovation
2. **Funding Source**
Scottish Funding Council's Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF)
3. **Author/Owner**
Professor Derek McGhee, Dean for Research and Innovation, and
Darlene Russell, UHI Knowledge Exchange, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Officer.
4. **Signature**
5. **Date**
13 January 2025
6. **Review date**
January 2026

Section 2 Background

1. What is the title of the proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure?

The title of this proposed activity is the Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (KE&I) Strategy.

2. What is the aim of proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure? Please provide as much detail as you can.

The KE&I Strategy that UHI is developing is in response to the Scottish Funding Council's Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (2024–2031). It will actively respond to the three public sector equality duties outlined in the Equality Act 2010 by:

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation through:

- Embedding anti-discriminatory practices in all knowledge exchange activities.
- Providing clear guidelines and training to staff and external partners on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
- Establishing mechanisms to identify and address discrimination or exclusion promptly.

Advancing equality of opportunity through:

- Ensuring that opportunities for participation in knowledge exchange are accessible to individuals and groups with protected characteristics.
- Actively addressing barriers to participation, including financial, physical, and systemic challenges.
- Supporting underrepresented groups through mentoring, targeted funding, and leadership development initiatives.

Promoting good relations through:

- Fostering collaboration and mutual respect among diverse stakeholders, including students, staff, external partners and local communities.
- Celebrating diversity through events and case studies that highlight contributions from individuals with protected characteristics.
- Actively challenging stereotypes and biases that may inhibit inclusive knowledge exchange and innovation.

By embedding these principles, the KE&I Strategy seeks to ensure that knowledge exchange not only drives economic and social innovation but also serves as a platform for promoting equality, fostering inclusive growth, and reducing inequalities amongst UHI's staff, students, stakeholders and collaborators.

Section 2 Background

Overview of the KE&I Strategy

The strategy aims to:

- Foster partnerships between academia, industry, and communities.
- Promote the translation of research into societal and economic benefits.
- Support innovation ecosystems for staff and students to address regional challenges and opportunities.

3. Who will be affected?

Please add the appropriate letters (P for Positive, N for Negative and N/I for neutral impact) to show the impact of the proposed action on each characteristic or staff and students with relation to

1. Eliminating discrimination,
 2. Advancing equality of opportunity
- and
3. Promoting and fostering good relations.

Protected characteristic	Eliminating discrimination	Advancing equality of opportunity	Promoting good relations
Age	P	P	P
Disability	P	P	P
Gender Reassignment	P	P	P
Marriage / Civil Partnership	P	P	P
Pregnancy and Maternity	P	P	P
Race	P	P	P
Religion or Belief	P	P	P
Sex	P	P	P
Sexual Orientation	P	P	P
Socio-economic and Social Class	P	P	P

Section 3 Impact

Scope of impact

The strategy encompasses activities that:

- Engage with diverse stakeholders, including students, staff, businesses, third sector organisations and local communities.
- Promote equitable access to resources and opportunities for collaboration.
- Ensure inclusivity in knowledge exchange practices, with a particular focus on underrepresented groups in academia and innovation.

Key considerations

1. Data collection and monitoring

Knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I) activities, including those funded through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF), will seek to collect and analyse demographic data on participants and beneficiaries to ensure that no groups are disproportionately excluded from the strategy's activities.

Data sources will include:

- Recruitment and participation in knowledge exchange programmes and activities.
- Engagement levels from underrepresented groups, including those with protected characteristics.

2. Accessibility and inclusion

Steps will be taken to ensure the accessibility of KE&I activities.

This will include:

- Providing resources in accessible formats (for example, braille, large print, and ensuring digital accessibility).
- Ensuring physical spaces meet accessibility standards.
- Offering financial support, where possible, to reduce barriers for underrepresented groups.

3. Outreach and engagement

The strategy will prioritise outreach to marginalised and disadvantaged groups through:

- Collaborative partnerships with community organisations.
- Targeted communications to ensure visibility and understanding of opportunities.
- Mentoring and capacity-building programmes for underrepresented participants.

Section 3 Impact

4. Inclusive leadership and governance

The governance structure will include representatives from diverse backgrounds to reflect and champion inclusivity throughout the decision-making process.

5. Evidence, review and mitigations

We will ensure that the evidence sources we rely on to identify potential positive, negative and neutral impacts on the protected characteristics of staff and students (for example, event participant evaluations and end-of-project reports and reviews) will include a section for generic equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) monitoring, as well as a specific section designed to gauge any potential negative impacts on protected characteristics. This will enable us to review the evidence to understand where the impacts of our activities are positive, neutral or negative in relation to the protected characteristics of our staff and students.

Evidence of the types of **positive impacts** we anticipate includes the following:

- Increased engagement and representation of women, ethnic minorities, disabled individuals, and other underrepresented groups in knowledge exchange and innovation activities.
- Enhanced capacity for collaboration among diverse stakeholders, fostering a culture of inclusion.
- Creation of equitable opportunities for participation and leadership in research and innovation.

Evidence of the types of **neutral impacts** we anticipate includes the following:

- Access to knowledge exchange opportunities: The KE&I Strategy will provide equal access to innovation and collaboration initiatives without explicitly targeting or excluding specific groups based on protected characteristics.
- Standardised policies and procedures: Our policies governing participation in knowledge exchange activities will be uniformly applied, ensuring no differential treatment across protected groups, but also not offering tailored support to address specific needs.
- Content neutrality in programmes and events: Innovation-related events, workshops or funding opportunities will be designed with a broad focus in mind, not specifically aligned to or against particular cultural, religious or identity-based perspectives.

Section 3 Impact

Evidence of the types of **negative impacts** we will monitor and mitigate against may include:

- Unequal participation from some protected characteristic groups due to limited awareness. This will be mitigated through targeted outreach campaigns and partnerships with equality-focused organisations within UHI's regions to raise awareness.
- Barriers to participation for individuals with disabilities. This will be mitigated through the implementation of accessibility audits and adjustments for physical and digital spaces.
- Addressing any imbalances in leadership roles within partnerships. This will be mitigated through gender-balanced governance structures and leadership development programmes.

The KE&I Strategy Board will review the positive, neutral and negative impact evidence identified through our evaluation and reporting mechanisms, with a view to maintaining the positive and neutral impacts and mitigating any negative impacts.

6. Who will be consulted?

Please list the staff or groups involved in completing this EIA as well as any engagement with equality groups.

Consultation and stakeholder engagement

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been informed by:

- Consultation with the university's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) team.
- Consultation with members of the Research and Graduate School Hub.

Further planned engagement with:

- UHI's Research and Knowledge Exchange Community, through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and the Knowledge Exchange Committee.
- External partners, including community and industry stakeholders.

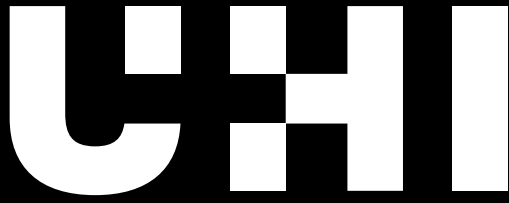
7. Will the proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure be accessible for all?

Yes, all information will be provided in accessible formats, with additional adjustments available upon request to meet individual accessibility needs.

Section 4

Summary of EIA outcome

1. **No further action to be carried out at this time of introducing the strategy.**
2. Amendments or changes to be made to the proposed activity / decision / new or revised policy or procedure.
3. **Proceed with awareness of adverse impact.**
4. Abandon process – stop and rethink.



UHI partnership

UHI Argyll

UHI Inverness

UHI Moray

UHI North, West and Hebrides

UHI Orkney

UHI Perth

UHI Shetland

Highland Theological College

Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

Scottish Association for Marine Science

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