

20 May 2019

Dear Principal

Survey on University Innovation Fund (UIF) approach

Purpose

- 1 This letter invites institutions to complete a short survey on the University Innovation Fund (UIF) approach and return this to SFC by **Monday 17 June 2019**.
- 2 This information will be used by SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) UIF Review Group to inform the review of the UIF approach over 2019-2020. Institutions will be invited to participate in a formal consultation exercise in 2020.

Background

- 3 As originally planned, SFC is reviewing the new UIF approach and funding model in 2019-2020.
- 4 The UIF Review Group will assist SFC with this review. It will review progress on the delivery of the UIF approach against the original vision and provide recommendations for improvement. The final outputs of the review are expected to be made in time to inform the AY2021-22 Outcome Agreement and funding cycle.
- 5 Further information on the review, including the terms of reference for the UIF Review Group, is available on the [UIF page](#)¹ of the SFC website.

Survey on UIF approach

- 6 The UIF Review Group wishes to conduct a short survey on the UIF approach to complement the evidence it currently has available to it. The purpose of this survey is, therefore, to gather initial evidence that is not consistently available elsewhere. This will provide a fuller and more nuanced picture of how the UIF approach is viewed within institutions and how the planning, management and measurement are undertaken to help deliver against the UIF outcomes.
- 7 A copy of the survey is annexed to this letter.

¹ UIF Review information: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/innovation/innovation-funding.aspx>

- 8 Institutions will be invited to participate in a formal consultation exercise in early 2020. This will include proposals on the development of the UIF approach and potential revisions to the funding model.
- 9 Please email your return to uifreview@sfc.ac.uk by **Monday 17 June 2019**.

Further information

- 10 For further information please contact me or Fiona Bates, Policy/Analysis Officer (Direct line: 0131 313 6609; email: fbates@sfc.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KM', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Keith McDonald

Assistant Director, Research & Innovation

(Direct line: 0131 313 6674; email: kmcdonald@sfc.ac.uk)

Annex

SFC survey on University Innovation Fund approach

The SFC is reviewing the new University Innovation Fund (UIF) approach and funding model over 2019-2020. A UIF Review Group has been established by SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) to assist with this and is seeking initial information on how the new UIF approach is viewed within institutions and how the planning, management and measurement are undertaken to help deliver against the UIF outcomes. This will complement the existing evidence available to the UIF Review Group which includes SFC outcome agreement information.

Responses should be concise (up to 250 words per question), containing key points, tangibles and evidence where possible. Where challenges are identified, institutions are encouraged to suggest methods/mechanisms for overcoming these in the future. The case study should be no more than 500 words in length.

A single institutional submission is requested.

Response form

Institution: Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Contact name: Stephen Broad/Deborah Keogh

Contact details: s.broad@rcs.ac.uk/d.keogh@rcs.ac.uk

Purpose
Please describe what your institution considers UIF to be for and how widely this is understood.
<p>The Royal Conservatoire understands the Universities Innovation Fund (UIF) to be a means of growing our knowledge exchange (KE) and innovation support and building capacity to engage in a range of collaborations with other HEIs. Both of these strands are designed to contribute to the agreed national priorities.</p> <p>Although some effective KE was embedded in the Conservatoire's operations before the UIF, we have drawn on the greater investment of the UIF to achieve a step change in our approach, with new initiatives and a significantly enhanced offer to staff, students and the wider community.</p> <p>These purposes are well understood among the senior management, and within the Research and Knowledge Exchange Directorate at all levels, but if it were considered desirable we could raise further awareness of the UIF as a key enabling investment by 'badging' the activities it funds, as these have a high visibility and are vigorously promoted across the institution: we recognise the transformative effect the additional</p>

investment has had on the Conservatoire.
Please describe how your institution ensures UIF is targeted at delivering the published UIF outcomes.
We have used the investment to provide a significantly enhanced offer that has been developed within the framework of the UIF. The activities and resources funded by UIF are therefore closely targeted at delivering the published outcomes for UIF. We map both our participation in the collaborative initiatives that are the heart of the UIF, and those we have developed 'in-house', against these outcomes.

Management and Planning
Please describe how your institution plans its UIF allocation and how well plans are understood across the institution. Are there any challenges to effective planning with the way UIF is allocated by the SFC?
<p>The annual plan for UIF is developed within the Directorate of Research and Knowledge Exchange and discussed and approved at the Conservatoire Senior Management Team.</p> <p>To ensure that activity is well understood across the Conservatoire, the plan and regular progress updates are shared with and interrogated by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, which includes representation from across the institution at all academic levels from lecturer to professor and director.</p> <p>We have experienced no particular challenges to our effective planning of activity on account of the way the UIF is allocated by SFC. The principal challenge to management and planning is the time it takes to create meaningful and operationally-effective partnerships – please see below.</p>
Please describe how your annual UIF allocation is managed within overall budgets in order to support delivery of your UIF plans.
The UIF allocation is managed within the Research and Knowledge Exchange budget. After salary costs, which account for a significant proportion of the funds received, the allocation is distributed across a small number of budget codes that align with key strands of activity and managed accordingly.

Collaboration
How does the new UIF collaborative framework (in addition to your Platform and Outcome Grant) help deliver your institution's KE strategy?
<p>The UIF collaborative framework plays a decisive role in our KE strategy and activities. As noted above, the UIF investment has allowed us to make a step change in our offer, meaning that, although some UIF funds are allocated towards maintaining some long-standing initiatives (such as our Athenaeum Awards for KE; our public Exchange Talks series and other public engagement work), the majority has been deployed to support new initiatives that are delivered in partnership. Some significant initiatives triggered by the collaborative agenda include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New strands for supporting staff in company engagement to facilitate innovation support in the creative industries – e.g. the Make It Work pilot, developed in

partnership with Interface.

- New collaborative partnerships around innovation and enterprise skills for students and graduates – e.g. the SHIFT Summer School, developed with the Glasgow School of Art and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.
- Participation in Converge and the development of the new Converge Creative Challenge with partners across the sector (with an RCS business *Singsation Games* winning best pitch at the Converge Pitch Night to Peers in June 2019).
<https://www.rcs.ac.uk/elizabeth-jenkinson-wins-best-pitch-at-converge/>
- New partnerships and connections with other HEIs to explore Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund bids that would otherwise be beyond our capacity, and further enterprise support for social impact.

Please identify any barriers or areas for improvement in the new collaborative approach, suggesting methods/mechanisms for overcoming these where possible.

Collaborative working is especially beneficial for a small specialist monoteknic institution such as the Conservatoire and the added value is clear; we also believe that we have a distinctive contribution to make to the wider sector. As noted above, the principal challenge in developing effective collaborations is the time it takes to find common ground and develop ideas that can take hold – such time is key to an effectively-implemented and productive collaboration. It would, therefore, be helpful if longer timescales could be built into planning for UIF activity – across development, delivery and evaluation.

Case study

The UIF Review Group would welcome at least one case study to help the group understand an outcome or impact which UIF has helped to support.

UIF Case Study of Collaborative Programme Activity

SHIFT

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, The Glasgow School of Art and Queen Margaret University

Vision

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RSC), Queen Margaret University (QMU), and Glasgow School of Art (GSA), have come together to create an inspiring new programme, SHIFT, to support the entrepreneurial development and transition of our creative industries students and new graduates. This collaborative work has been catalysed by the aims and ambitions of UIF Outcome 4, Entrepreneurship: *Scottish HEIs as a sector will have made a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff and businesses.* SHIFT is designed to equip participants with the collaborative, practical, creative and entrepreneurial skills that will support them in making the shift from being a student to becoming a successful

professional practitioner, intrapreneur, or company founder.

Aligning with the Scottish Government's ambition for the creative industries sector and the HEIs talent pipeline feeding into them, SHIFT will provide a key addition to the current enterprise and innovation ecosystem in Scotland, working alongside other programmes and initiatives to support the achievement of sustainable economic and inclusive growth.

Context

The Scottish Government has outlined plans to become a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation, leading to wider benefits for all. *In Scotland, the creative industries comprise over 15,000 businesses employing more 70,000 people. These figures are in addition to the large number of freelancers and students studying creative courses, together making a significant contribution to national wealth and international reputation.* (Scot Gov website).

RCS, QMU, and GSA are three of the leading arts institutions in Scotland and our graduates face similar challenges upon entering their professions. SHIFT aims to address these challenges and provide students and recent graduates with the skills and tools they will need to be successful in their careers. SHIFT recognizes higher education's important role in providing a supportive creative environment for entrepreneurship and innovation and will work with industry partners to address the specific entrepreneurial needs of creative industries graduates. SHIFT will address some current gaps in training and support available to entrepreneurial students and recent graduates on how to professionalise their practice through company creation or self-employment. SHIFT has aligned with the CAN DO Scotland programme in 2019 offering a creative industries specific offer into their programme.

Overall Programme of Activity

SHIFT will take shape as an annual week-long, intensive summer school programme, followed by a programme of specialist events and online resources throughout the academic year. The SHIFT 12-month pilot commenced in May 2019, with a call to action to our three student communities, and will be rigorously evaluated over the course of the pilot. We will share findings with our colleagues across the HEI system and explore further opportunities to share learning and, potentially, explore the development of a multi partner SHIFT initiative over an extended period. This could provide a focused opportunity for creative industries graduates across the country, at a crucial point in their development, to tap into industry expertise and guidance, ensuring that they have the entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitudes to carve out a successful and viable professional path for their talents.

SHIFT Summer School will take place from Monday 9 September until Friday 13 September 2019,

at the Tontine Building, in Trongate, Glasgow. We expect 60 students and recent graduates from across all three institutions to participate. There is no charge for participants to attend, but participants will be selected through an application process which will identify students who have the clearest need and career aspirations that will be supported most strongly by the programme. Applications are currently open and we expect to fill all 60 funded spaces. Any places that become available in the weeks before the programme commences will be opened up to other partner institutions.

Inputs/Investment

The pilot SHIFT programme will cost £45,000 and is split between the three institutions made up of cash and in-kind contributions. At the time of writing, the budget is still being finalised and we expect the level of in-kind being made available to the programme will take the value closer to £60,000, when we include venue costs, sponsored catering and staff time. A full budget breakdown will be provided as part of the SHIFT evaluation report.

Activities

SHIFT will deliver specialist events and resources for budding creative entrepreneurs, freelancers, artists, designers, musicians, producers and performers. The landmark programme of 2019 will be SHIFT Summer School. Delivered with a wide range of industry partners including the BBC, Equator and Cultural Enterprise Office, it will be an intensive, week-long series of interactive workshops, small break-out conversations, creative activities and one-to-one clinics.

A draft summary of the SHIFT Summer School programme looks like this:

Day 1 (Monday 9 September) – The Business of You:

Focusing on you as a freelancer, performer and maker, you will explore different ways to model your working style. This day will include a workshop delivered by the BBC exploring how you can be a content creator and how to use this as a tool to promote your work.

Day 2 (Tuesday 10 September) – Create, Collaborate, Content: Led by Jamie Jefferson, Chief Creative Officer and Founder of Equator, this day includes sessions on how to develop your personal brand, collaborating on creative projects to uncover the most effective and imaginative routes to get your work out into the world.

Day 3 (Wednesday 11 September) – Mapping your Creative Growth:

A day to look at your networks, your audiences, and discover how to build the narrative behind your work and create a trajectory going forward. The sessions will be delivered by Dr Michael Johnson, supported by specialists from the performing arts, to help you use visual mapping methods for your project organisation.

Day 4 (Thursday 12 September) – **Nailing It Down and Starting It Up:**

Led by the Cultural Enterprise Office, this is a day to look at the practicalities of self-employment, the legal ins and outs, and the financial truths (i.e. taxes) setting yourself up as a freelancer or as a company, and how to protect your work. It will also include round table sessions with a wide range of industry practitioners sharing their stories through informal conversations.

Day 5 (Friday 13 September) – **Exploring you and your best working environment:**

A chance to reflect on the importance of where and how you work, resilience and wellbeing, thinking about how your work fits into the rest of your life. You'll finish the week developing your action plan to help you navigate your next steps.

SHIFT summer School will be followed by an ongoing series of SHIFT events and opportunities for our students and graduates throughout the academic year.

Outcomes and Impacts

Working with peer groups from across a range of disciplines and with different skills, SHIFT is designed to equip students and graduates with the collaborative, practical, creative and entrepreneurial skills that will support them in making the transitional shift from being a student to becoming an independent professional practitioner in the cultural and creative industries. Participating students and recent graduates will leave SHIFT with new ideas, and an action plan for the next steps in their professional lives. An important result of SHIFT will be in-depth evaluation and the key findings from the programme will be shared with partners and future approaches will be developed jointly. We expect that another outcome of SHIFT to be the production of digital content to be shared widely, and as a future resource for participants and the wider population. This resource will share practice on supporting the enterprise aims of our communities of students and graduates, and develop new tools and resources which can be shared amongst the wider network of HEIs and creative industries.

SHIFT measures and KPIs are still being finalised at the time of writing, but will include the following:

Pre SHIFT - a baseline will be taken of where participants start in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

End of SHIFT - participants will complete monitoring forms at the end of the summer school to state what has changed.

Ongoing SHIFT - as the sample size is relatively small (60 participants) we will stay in touch with the students and graduates and gather monitoring forms and conduct interviews to identify any lasting impacts, the strengths of the intervention and any ongoing considerations for the programme. This six-month interaction will look at any self-employment registration, company start-ups, projects produced, or finance raised during the period.

The follow on programme of SHIFT events through 2019/20 will also enable the development of a peer network, which will add to the evidence base.

Thank you for completing this survey.