

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

Your organisation	Edinburgh College
<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>Whilst the consultation does not require colleges to respond specifically to Q1-3 we have provided brief comment where we believe there is an opportunity to reinforce the need to take a whole tertiary approach/perspective.</p> <p>To deliver on its renewed purpose, the University KEIF outcomes framework should evolve to incorporate the common themes embedded within recent publications such as Levelling-up the United Kingdom, The Cumberford Little Report, The Muscatelli Report etc.</p> <p>These themes include the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- place in the innovation ecosystem</li> <li>- alignment with City Region priorities</li> <li>- long-term sustainability of outcomes</li> <li>- adoption of a team Scotland approach</li> <li>- meaningful impact assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Outcomes need to pivot to new challenges and the mission-led approach favoured by SFC such as Covid recovery, a just transition, and the wellbeing economy, as well as more clearly connecting with the outcomes of college and skills agencies as it is notable that the current outcomes framework does not recognise Colleges as a primary collaborative partner.</p> <p>Despite the KEIF being driven by a mission-led approach and single vision, funding will be allocated using a traditional sector-based approach, with separate HE and College funding streams. Given this structure it is essential that the outcomes framework attached to both funds are mutually reinforcing to avoid problems and opportunities being addressed in a fragmented fashion. Suitable impact</p>

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	measures across the whole KEIF programme should support the refreshed outcome framework and incentivise Universities, Colleges, and key collaborative partners to act in a coordinated, integrated manner.
<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>The current UIF collaborative framework does not support a connected and integrated tertiary system.</p> <p>The framework could evolve to support good practice and purposeful collaboration on a regional basis through incorporation of Colleges as essential collaborative partners. Current broad outcomes continue to set the framework for UIF, with HEIs able to prioritise as appropriate through the outcome agreement process, with a broad commitment to both individual strategies and collaboration.</p> <p>Outcome agreement guidance SFC/GD/22/2021 (UFI Plans for AY 21-22) asks HEIs to provide a recovery-focused plan evidenced by learning with stakeholders at a local/national level such as local authorities or Scottish Enterprise, however Colleges are not referenced as a relevant collaborative partner in the guidance nor are they referenced in the outcomes themselves.</p> <p>This current collaborative framework could evolve as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alignment with the single narrative or vision statement of the KEIF</li> <li>- Including reference to colleges as a primary collaborative partner</li> <li>- Development of KEIF outcomes to be mutually reinforcing to affect agglomeration and a virtuous cycle of improvement on a regional and national basis</li> <li>- Recognition of the importance of place and need for outcomes to be tailored and prioritised to meet regional need. The relationship between 'place and colleges' cannot be understated. A distinct characteristic of colleges is that they are routed in local communities and regions, local people and</li> </ul>

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	<p>local businesses.</p> <p>- Collaboration with colleges and Skills agencies (including Scottish Enterprise) as gateway criteria for initiatives.</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>In planning activities institutions should demonstrate an understanding of local economic geographies and demographics, with impact measured through the achievement of quantitative results which help improve transparency and accountability.</p> <p>A challenge of a mission-led approach is that measuring the non-monetary impact of initiatives is difficult. What is clear is that the impact and outcomes of the University KEIF should be measured alongside those of the College KEIF in terms of their contribution towards the single vision driving the programme. Both funds should be mutually reinforcing and contribute to the achievement of a single narrative.</p> <p>Use of quantitative data to inform future funding allocations provides an incentive to prioritise KE&amp;I activities, however this should be accompanied by robust measures to monitor quality of outputs as well as the economic, social, and future value of outputs, which are just as important as immediate benefits. SFC could encourage use of real-time data at the local level, giving leaders across institutions the information they need to deliver, experiment, and evaluate swiftly and effectively.</p>
<p><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></p>	<p>The university KEIF, with Interface, could help support collaboration with Colleges by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pivoting to include Colleges as a key collaborative partner in the HE KEIF programme, encouraging joint dialogue between tertiary education partners and enterprise agencies in support of SMEs</li> <li>- Address prevailing assumptions about the capability of Colleges which may prohibit college institutions being considered as a default Interface partner</li> <li>- Co-designing initiatives funded by HE and college KEIF funds to cultivate place-based innovation activities designed to stimulate the local economy</li> </ul>

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	<p>- Providing match-funding support for College KEIF initiatives; evidencing collaboration and supporting the development of larger funding packages which may be more attractive to grant funding bodies or commercial sponsors</p>
<p><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></p>	<p>The current funding model for colleges is exclusively geared to learning and teaching; determined by hours of learning, volumes of students, and provision which is predominately qualifications based. It is structured and based on assumptions reflecting traditional ‘academic’ years (activity, costs, income); is single year.</p> <p>In almost direct contrast, businesses looking for support to enhance productivity, upskilling/re skilling employees, product/process/workforce applied innovation expect responsive/just in time interventions at a time and place that suits the business and require predominately bespoke interventions. Smaller businesses often require support for upfront training and business needs analysis as well as disproportionately high levels of time commitment from colleges to progress collaborations.</p> <p>The College KEIF could act to enhance capacity in Colleges to support a new model of training, innovation, entrepreneurship and internationalisation which reflects the successes of the Basque Government model. The Basque Vocational Education and Training Plan, established in December 2014, outlined the measures required for VET to furnish a response to the needs of the economy by increasing capacity of individual Colleges - providing core funding for the dual purposes of learning and teaching and supporting businesses. This differs considerably from the current Scottish model where core funding is provided solely in support of learning and teaching. Business engagement and collaboration is supported by siloed, grant-based, short-term initiatives, e.g. FWDF, College Innovation Funding, low value Innovation vouchers where access and delivery costs far outweigh income and little if any opportunity for leveraging.</p> <p>The KEIF can best support Colleges to be effective agents of KE&amp;I through the provision of flexible, non-prescriptive funds which allow institutions to adopt positive, trusted behaviours and fulfil long-held ambition, providing a pathway to growth and financial sustainability. It is important to note that</p>

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core grant in aid does not cover costs. All non-core incomes streams currently generated or leveraged by Edinburgh College are a necessary contribution to achieving a balanced financial outturn.

Working within a constrained and prescriptive financial environment, Colleges already endeavour to act as successful agents of KE&I activities and have a long history of effective engagement; delivering activities across a range of themes pertinent to this consultation.

KE&I currently means different things to different Colleges. Edinburgh College adopts a pro-innovation culture, engaging in the innovation ecosystem in the exchange of skills, knowledge, and ideas both domestically and internationally. Top-level objectives are underpinned by the implementation of KE&I activities which are embedded in our curriculum, commercial and international plans.

The KE, applied innovation and wide range of business support activity carried out by Edinburgh College is business critical to ensuring our core provision, learning & teaching is industry relevant and future skills proofed i.e. our core activity, KE&I and wider business support and partnerships should be 'two sides of the same coin'.

The ambition should be for a college sector to be at the forefront/ahead of industry rather than a sector that is simply responding and reactive to need. Colleges have an opportunity to drive business transformation. For example, Edinburgh College has recently opened a Renewables and Energy Efficiency Centre at its Granton Campus with support from partners Scottish Power Energy Networks, the Energy Skills Partnership and Worcester Bosch. The centre comprises a range of equipment which will be used in construction and the house-building sector now, and in years to come with the aim of helping us to save energy and move towards a net zero future. The College received funding from Scottish Power Energy Networks and the Energy Skills Partnership to fund some of the renewable technology equipment housed at this centre. Equipment includes, air-source heat pumps, ground-source heat pumps, solar PV panels, and rainwater harvesting equipment. In addition, the College has become a long-term strategic partner of Worcester Bosch which has supplied additional state-of-the art equipment, some of which is not yet commercially available.

This new training facility will support students, apprentices and those already in industry, to learn how

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to use cutting edge equipment and learn key skills required to build low energy homes, and to modify existing homes to become more energy efficient. We believe that it is critical that students, apprentices and those within the supply chain learn these technologies so they can embed them early in their careers, understand them and start to use these technologies to build houses for the future. It should be recognised that, when capacity allows, Apprenticeships, FWDF activities and innovation initiatives can directly lead to meaningful collaboration of this nature; creating long-term, mutually beneficial relationships which support both KE&I objectives and economic transformation.

Curriculum teams engage in data and knowledge sharing, technology demonstrations, innovation challenges, public lectures, expertise sharing, consultancy, research, network facilitation via events, and our Quality and Research led dedicated research and innovation forum which incorporates input from local, national, and international stakeholders. Additional activities include provision of meeting spaces and facilities for use by SMEs, shared capital access, (loan of equipment from business, investment of equipment from business, demonstrations of equipment to businesses), work-based student projects, work placements, bespoke programmes, and apprenticeships.

These activities are undertaken in response to demand, using limited resources and, where possible, alternative funding sources to realise tangible outputs for industry. Edinburgh College are particularly successful in understanding the needs of the SME-base, and recognise that for initial core capacity funding from the KEIF will support the gradual scalability of these activities. The College KEIF should offer:

- Mission-orientated themes which address social, economic, and technological challenges
- Funding for teams and value streams rather than projects and prescriptive activities
- Non-prescriptive programme guidance/application of funds
- Minimal bureaucracy in the management and monitoring of funds
- Ability to respond at speed to the needs of business and wider economic circumstance; supporting

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	<p>the responsive skills system required by industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ability to use KEIF funds to leverage additional funding support</li> <li>- A full and active role in the innovation ecosystem recognised within the KEIF frameworks for collaboration; driving a cohesive, multi-agency approach</li> <li>- Support for inwards investors to maximise the benefits they bring to the Scottish economy; facilitating flexible collaboration with Colleges focused on the development of human, social and institutional capital.</li> </ul>
<p><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></p>	<p>It is essential that the first cycle of the College KEIF establishes a baseline for future years and gathers enough data to gain a true representation of the performance of the sector. A three to five-year cycle would provide Colleges with the time and opportunity to increase capacity of key teams, and pivot organisational priorities. During the first phase (3 years) Colleges could address potential gaps in current provision and scale activity levels in-line with the KEIF vision, to produce the quantitative data required by programme managers to inform future funding.</p> <p>The importance of the flexibility required of the KEIF funding model during this first phase cannot be overstated. Currently, KE&amp;I means different things to different colleges who have, in the past, utilised scarce resource to react to immediate needs of students and industry. This means Colleges have developed in an inconsistent and disparate approach in this area, with different levels of physical infrastructure and human capital across the sector. To adapt to a consistent tertiary education approach driven by the KEIF strategy and collaborative framework, mutually reinforcing outcomes and stakeholder governance mechanisms, Colleges need to be trusted to act responsibly; using funding as appropriate/required to develop their individual capacity in line with the KEIF vision. Consistency however must not be at the expense of delivery models that support regional variations, consistent with an increasing focus on a 'place'.</p> <p>The first cycle of KEIF funding should not be considered a 'pilot' phase. The pilot approach is often</p>

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	<p>characterised by short termism both in ambition and funding and does not allow for long-term strategic ambition. The first cycle of the college KEIF should instead facilitate long-term objectives by incorporating an initial capacity-building phase, followed by 2-3 years delivery before formal review is undertaken. Key staff recruited during this period, who have developed skills, knowledge and experience, would continue to deliver into the second cycle of activity and beyond.</p>
<p><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></p>	<p>The College KEIF represents an exciting opportunity for a mission-led approach to KE&amp;I activities which can mobilise Colleges and other stakeholders to work together in a collaborative manner and share good practice across the ecosystem. Colleges are adept at working in partnership, sharing and learning together in day-to-day operations and within thematic groups, with Colleges Scotland and College Development Network playing a role in the co-ordination of collaborative fora and research and enhancement activities.</p> <p>A KEIF framework of collaboration incorporating all stakeholders would promote the recognition of the college contribution to the innovation ecosystem, and would be beneficial in driving the interdependency of College and University outcomes and activities, and future mission-led funding models.</p> <p>Colleges are experienced in collaborating with each other and industry partners. For example, in Autumn 2021 Edinburgh college and City of Glasgow college won the Herald Award for Outstanding Business Achievement Award for the delivery of a Fast Track to Financial Services. The course is currently run by the City of Glasgow and Edinburgh Colleges and co-delivered with industry partners including BNP Paribas, Lloyds Banking Group, Barclays, Royal Bank of Scotland, HSBC, Tesco Bank, TSB, and Aberdeen Standard Investments among others.</p>
<p><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></p>	<p>Edinburgh College welcomes the concept of an Entrepreneurial campus which reconciles current college activities and the KE&amp;I strategy with the goal of the National Economic Recovery Strategy to a Develop an entrepreneurial campus infrastructure, working with the college and university sector to establish campuses as hotbeds of start-up creation.</p> <p>As stated by SFC, successful delivery of the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy is intended to generate a</p>



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	<p>larger, more diverse, pool of entrepreneurially minded students and academics, increase the rates of start-ups being generated in university and college settings, with access to expertise and facilities where market validation, prototyping and training can be developed. This clearly represents a unique opportunity to embed a baseline-level of provision across individual institutions and cultivate the strength of the regional innovation ecosystem.</p> <p>It could be argued that there is a plethora of public sector support for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship however it can be fragmented and confusing, and occasionally contradictory. A positive, tertiary education approach would see Colleges and universities working together with skills agencies and other stakeholders to co-design the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy to analyse and benchmark provision and design a collaborative framework which addresses gaps/opportunities in the current landscape to provide cohesive pathways for entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The model adopted by Colleges Scotland and Skills Development Scotland in the development of the College CEIAG framework may be a useful reference tool in bringing together key stakeholders in the co-creation of an Entrepreneurial baseline framework which guarantees all students a consistent experience and access to key learning, knowledge, experience and support, with the role of Bridge to Business and other stakeholders being consistent across institutions and regions.</p>
<p><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>	<p>Edinburgh College can highlight a range of good practice to support and inform the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy, including activities delivered in partnership with Business Gateway, Interface, HE partners and industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiple curriculum areas with courses awarded level 1 Scottish Innovation and Enterprise badges</li> <li>- Business start-up support and advice for students including live streaming events with Business Gateway Youth Specialist Business Adviser during covid lockdown <a href="https://youtu.be/h9ueLLSS9y8">https://youtu.be/h9ueLLSS9y8</a></li> <li>- Engagement in the innovation voucher programme - engaging students with businesses to solve VR and IT problems</li> <li>- Industry speakers and guest lectures</li> <li>- Careers education, advice, information and guidance</li> </ul>

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	<p>Employability days incorporating entrepreneurship workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Increasingly using Industry designed live projects and/or business challenges to holistically assess students on mainstream provision</li><li>- Artist in residence programme; creative industries students using college facilities to establish and build their own companies on campus.</li></ul> <p>Looking further afield the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy offers an opportunity to mirror the successes of the MIT-Greater Boston area model, based on the power of proximity where, in addition to campus-based activities which benefit students and staff, stakeholders contribute to an internationally recognised innovation district. In mirroring this approach, an entrepreneurial campus strategy grounded in place could facilitate the creation of dedicated innovation environments hosting a plethora of collaborative programmes, services, and activities to support entrepreneurial talent into building new companies.</p> <p>Adopting a place-based approach and encouraging the holistic cultivation of regional innovation eco-systems offers an opportunity to gather real-time feedback on future direction from innovation environments directly aligned to economic geography. Entrepreneurial campuses and regional hubs could incorporate good practice from across the sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Accelerator/incubator resources</li><li>- Project advisors</li><li>- Career exploration</li><li>- Collaborative space</li><li>- Dedicated courses</li><li>- Events and networking</li><li>- Ideation sessions</li><li>- Legal Advice</li><li>- Maker spaces</li><li>- Prize Competitions</li><li>- Project Funds/   fellowships</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Projects to join</li> <li>- Resources for Women</li> <li>- Skills Workshops</li> <li>- Student Clubs</li> </ul>
<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>	<p>Repositioning Innovation Centres as stable and long-term infrastructure investments is a positive step forward, presenting an opportunity to recognise the developing role of colleges in the new collaborative framework, as capacity evolves during the KEIF first phase.</p> <p>The pivot to becoming long-term stable investments provides an opportunity for Innovation Centres and Colleges to review existing relationships and assumptions in the current fragmented and inequitable system; positioning Colleges as a natural collaborative partner in key aspects of activity, and proactively differentiating between college and university contribution in terms of the specialisms and attributes of each sector. Innovation Centres should address gaps prevalent in the current array of public sector interventions (particularly with regards support for SMEs and emerging business - as highlighted in the UK Innovation Strategy), with Colleges playing a key role in supporting businesses to become investment-ready through the acquisition and updating of skills and acumen.</p>
<p><b>Question 11: we would welcome views on how we could best strengthen the Innovation Centres’ 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 Interface, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and other relevant agencies and organisations.</b></p>	<p>The relationship between colleges and universities could best be strengthened by Innovation Centres, alongside Interface, clearly differentiating between the complementary but distinct role of colleges and universities within the innovation ecosystem, and the specialisms and attributes of each; demonstrating an understanding of where strengths and ambitions lie to better facilitate meaningful multi-stakeholder initiatives which address the needs of industry and maximises available funding.</p> <p>Some preconceptions and unverified assumptions with regard the role of Colleges within the innovation ecosystem are based on the barriers presented by the current funding model which inhibits both the development of resource/capacity to support strategic teams and missions, and generation of surplus for reinvestment.</p> <p>The current notional fee model and variable credit pricing structure encourages all funds to be viewed as contributing to, and essential to, ‘balancing the books’ with little to no room for creative flexibility</p>

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	<p>in use of funding to act as mature, responsive, meaningful partners. Moving to an environment where colleges are less reliant on core SFC funding must first deliver funding levels, distribution and allocation models that ensure a viable and sustainable sector with a clear and understood core purpose.</p> <p>Colleges could more easily move forward as trusted partners in mission-led collaborative initiatives and progress towards financial sustainability through alternate income generation if these barriers were addressed through the provision of strategic, non-core funds which support ambition and a Team Scotland approach.</p> <p>Tertiary system institutions, and other relevant agencies named in this consultation process are interdependent and all activities within the innovation ecosystem should be mutually reinforcing. Thus, the challenges of the college sector funding model not only impact on Colleges; they prevent the achievement of agglomeration and encourage cycles of stagnation or limited advancement which weigh heavy on the public purse.</p>
<p><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></p>	<p>The innovation centre model is designed to support businesses large and small to increase the pace of innovation, however the nature of services offered imply a far more natural affiliation with larger scale, successful businesses with an interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reaching out to leading academics undertaking cutting-edge research</li> <li>- Accessing and managing EU and UK funding</li> <li>- Upskilling leadership and management teams</li> <li>- Connecting with sector-leaders in their industry</li> </ul> <p>These services may overlook the needs of smaller, younger businesses, by presenting innovation as aligned to complex research-driven or technological advancements. To address this issue, there is</p>

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	<p>potential for the innovation centre model to adopt a broader perspective and become more clearly connected to college programmes and specialisms.</p> <p>Innovation centres could collaborate with colleges in supporting SMEs and Microbusinesses to engage with the fundamentals of the innovation ecosystem, building capability and confidence.</p> <p>Edinburgh College understands, through experience, that many SMEs lack the investment readiness required to engage with the current Innovation Centre model and that a refreshed, holistic model could provide smaller businesses with the fundamental support, knowledge and skills required to take advantage of the latest innovations. This approach would create greater value for society, specifically the wellbeing and security of smaller, younger businesses, and enhanced outcomes which align to both Innovation strategies and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.</p>
<p><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></p>	<p>Relationships with Colleges could be strengthened by clearly recognising the role of colleges within the Interface portfolio. The expertise of Colleges, in particular the expertise available for businesses pursuing enhanced human, social and institutional capital, as well as productivity gains and applied research support, is currently lost as Interface appears to have little sense of Colleges as primary collaborative partners.</p> <p>The language used on the Interface website and programme guidance documents is that of academic partners and academic institutions, which is positive and reflect a mission-led approach, however the number of innovation vouchers delivered by colleges is miniscule when compared to university engagement with the programme, and it is telling that in the Interface guide to collaboration only HE academics are quoted, as well as business leaders who have engaged with HE partners. There are no quotes, feedback or examples of college engagement in the guide, reflecting the lack of traction made in College engagement. Clearly recognising the role of Colleges as primary partners, distinct from universities but no less important to the broader innovation ecosystem, would create opportunities for meaningful dialogue and timeous engagement which has been difficult to achieve in the past.</p>

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<p><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></p>	<p>Recognition of the role of the college sector in the Scottish Innovation Ecosystem by Interface, positioning colleges as primary collaborative partner in its operating model would support the development of more effective and productive relationships between businesses and Colleges. The language utilised by Interface could evolve to provide greater clarity for business. Current Interface collaboration guidance refers to universities/colleges, as almost interchangeable institutions, without reference to the specialisms, capacity or varying nature, scale and scope of support on offer. The webpage which hosts the collaboration guidance document doesn't reference colleges, but the first line of the document does. A confusing, conflated vocabulary is used (inconsistently) and there is no clarity on the role and scope of colleges in supporting businesses, particularly SMEs.</p>
<p><b>Question 15: we would welcome general views, based on direct experience of the Innovation Voucher scheme, on how it could evolve and better support our system for KE&amp;I.</b></p>	<p>Edinburgh College has direct experience of working with Interface and values the positive relationships developed because of engagement with the Innovation Voucher programme. Suggested changes for evolutions to its operating model include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition of Colleges as equal partners in the Innovation Voucher landscape, with a specialist and distinct offering which adds value to the programme, particularly for SMEs</li> <li>- Simplification of programme administration</li> <li>- Adaptation of language adopted throughout programme documents to render them more accessible to smaller companies</li> <li>- Flexibility of scale and scope of funding available</li> <li>- Ability to leverage match funding from other sources</li> </ul> <p>The innovation voucher scheme is an important part of the KE&amp;I infrastructure; however, it could be deduced, through interrogation of levels of engagement in recent years, that multiple barriers exist for College engagement. This includes, but is not limited to:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assumptions supporting negative perceptions of College capabilities</li> <li>- HE institutions as 'go-to' partners of choice</li> <li>- Colleges being considered secondary partners, limited in their opportunity to engage</li> <li>- Limited value to both colleges and businesses they support with application and delivery costs far outweighing the value of the vouchers.</li> </ul>
<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>	<p>The scope of the Innovation Voucher programme could easily widen to support a broader definition of pro-innovation culture where business is provided with access to the support, knowledge, and skills they require. By addressing capacity and resource issues, the College KEIF will facilitate Colleges stakeholders as equal partners in the innovation ecosystem and increase opportunities for first-time collaboration in areas of most importance to many companies, particularly SMES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building human capital; addressing skills gaps (a key ambition of the UK innovation strategy)</li> <li>- Institutional capital; leadership, capacity building and supporting a fundamental understanding of innovation and the innovation ecosystem</li> <li>- The development and provision of micro-credentials</li> <li>- Supporting physical capital; addressing low rates of technology adoption and under-utilised knowledge</li> </ul>
<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</b>	<p>Edinburgh College maintains a CRM system which helps facilitates ongoing dialogue with industry partners and has a dedicated business development team who engage with companies in the delivery of a large portfolio of bespoke commercial programmes.</p> <p>Where the College has been successful with Innovation Vouchers (relating to the development of</p>

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<p><b>solutions to this which can help us better understand the outcome we hope to achieve?</b></p>	<p>unique graphical front-end IT solutions), positive relationships have been maintained with the companies involved, with ongoing dialogue and efforts made to maximise the relationship for the benefit of students, staff and business partners. Ongoing activities include guest lectures/speakers, case studies, work placement opportunities and development of bespoke upskilling programmes.</p> <p>In addition to this, Edinburgh College has a dedicated research centre and long-standing innovation and research forum which drives forward improvement in the context of the student journey (including progression opportunities), promotes applied research from within the college sector, rather than imposed data sets and supports staff to engage in research for the benefit of both students and the community. The research forum engages in long-term studies which support research and improvement projects through to completion. This helps the College understand the economic and social value of activities, by measuring the positive change affected by initiatives.</p> <p>It would be positive if, following this consultation outcome, a longitudinal approach could be taken, using surveys and other monitoring tools to record impact and associated outcomes over an agreed period.</p>
<p><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></p>	<p>Adopting a design-led approach to mission orientated innovation has worked successfully in Sweden, (see the Vinnova Case study: A design-led missions' approach - 2021). SFC could adopt a similar model to utilise resources and investment to best effect and realise economic transformation as desired by the Scottish Government. The building blocks of this approach are intimated in this consultation paper; a single vision, mission-led collaborative framework and a member-driven governance system. Should the first phase of the College KEIF successfully increase capacity as desired and address gaps in provision then the evolution of the programme to a mission-led funding model would be possible.</p>
<p><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</b></p>	<p>The role and anticipated impact of a KE&amp;I advisory board which incorporates stakeholder membership must be clear from the outset, particularly how such a group supports/drives an environment that allows stakeholders to work responsively and in an agile manner with business. Such a group should</p>



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<p><b>most effective support for SFC's role in the ecosystem.</b></p>	<p>not duplicate other governance and/or advisory arrangements elsewhere in the system, but should offer stakeholders an opportunity to adopt a hands-on governance role in the operation of the KEIF and other related mission-led funds as they emerge.</p>
<p><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 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>	<p>Publish information and excerpts from this survey response INCLUDING the organisation name.</p>