

## University Innovation Fund 2018-19

### University of Stirling

#### Introduction

1. The University of Stirling is pleased to submit this paper detailing how we intend to utilise our grant allocation from the University Innovation Fund (UIF) in Academic Year 2018-19. We note that the level of funding for the UIF, specifically the additional funding arising from the Barnett consequentials, is subject to confirmation by the UK Government in its 2018 Autumn Budget. The University reserves the right to revise commitments set out in this submission in the event that our grant allocation from the UIF is lower than anticipated.
2. Innovation was a key founding principle for the University of Stirling and we continue to embed it at the heart of everything we do. Our Strategic Plan 2016-2021 illustrates this commitment with innovation being identified as one of three key underpinning institutional enablers. We recognise that “Finding new ways of thinking and doing things that place us at the cutting edge; identifying opportunities that benefit students, staff and stakeholders; growing income through research, knowledge exchange and commercialisation; and ensuring our curriculum meets the needs of citizens in the 21st century” is essential.
3. Our institutional vision is “to be recognised across the world as a University that addresses the needs of society through innovative interdisciplinary research; learning and teaching of the highest quality; and by sharing our knowledge with the world”. We aim to be recognised as leaders of innovation and enterprise through our distinctive collaborative activities that create positive and sustainable impact on society and the economy. We are committed to applying a creative, imaginative and entrepreneurial philosophy to all that we do. We are leaders in higher education innovation, in Scotland and beyond.

#### UIF Funding Allocation

4. We welcome the SFC’s decision to continue the platform grant element of UIF funding at the level of £250k.
5. We confirm that we will commit to investing above the required £250k match funding for the UIF platform through:
  - Our investment into the development of the reach and purpose of the University of Stirling Innovation Park (USIP) as our vehicle for delivering a diverse portfolio of innovation and commercialisation support (specifically business incubation and support).
  - Continued programmes of;
    - i. Student and graduate enterprise
    - ii. Knowledge exchange, including Dementia Services, Culture and Heritage
    - iii. Public engagement
6. The details of the outcomes we will deliver through this work are set out in our Outcome Agreement for 2017-2020. Within that document, one of the five key priority areas for the University is “**Priority 4: Greater innovation in the economy – a national culture of enterprise and innovation leading to a more productive and sustainable economy**”. Specifically, we will:
  1. Continue to build on opportunities for students and graduates to develop their employability and enterprise skills in preparation for the future world of work. In doing so we will extend the learning from our successful ‘Making the Most of Masters’ programme and embed it in a wider range of our postgraduate qualifications; enhance the programme of support for student and graduate entrepreneurs.
  2. Play a leading role in the development of innovation through mainstreaming programmes such as the Sporting Chance Initiative, Sport Hive, Entrepreneurial Quest and expanded activity in aquaculture commercialisation and enterprise support.

3. Support our local region through the Stirling & Clackmannanshire City Region Deal as partners in economic and community transformation, particularly in innovation support, digital skills development and the leisure, heritage and tourism, food and drink and creative sectors. This will include ongoing initiatives in the heritage sector through our tripartite relationship with Forth Valley College and Historic Environment Scotland and multi-partner collaborative working with the construction and heritage sectors.
4. Continue to implement our Innovation and Enterprise Strategy 2017-2021 as a key enabler of our strategic ambitions.
5. Continue to host a number of nationally important archives and collections that are regularly exhibited to the public. We will continue to extend our archive collections and public engagement with them.
6. Develop further collaboration with the University's Macrobert Arts Centre to bring researchers and performance artists together in novel collaborations, which promote public engagement with research.
7. The increase in UIF for 2018-19 is very welcome. The additional funding will facilitate a wide variety of activity, not least the capacity to engage constructively with the Stirling & Clackmannanshire City Region Deal. The potential for collaboration with industry, public and third sectors is considerable and the University has a significant role to play in the delivery of the Deal's outcomes, impacting directly on economic development and societal impact. Specifically, we will be working directly with companies within the aquaculture sector, with local authorities to establish Scotland's International Environment Centre and with local authorities, business and the third sector to establish an exemplar of intergenerational living that will be established as a living lab to test emerging innovation and technologies to facilitate support independent living, and one that can be replicated as we seek ways to support an ageing population. All of these areas will be bases from which substantial individual and collaborative bids will be developed to underpin activity in these areas.

### **Contribution to national outcomes**

7. The sections that follow outline the projects and actions that we are undertaking and their contribution to national outcomes. We continue to pursue the outcomes within our overall programme, incorporating them into the enhanced framework as set out below. In addition to our own specific actions, we are proactively engaging with, and delivering, collaborative projects in the areas of demand stimulation, entrepreneurialism, international and equality and diversity, with other Scottish universities. We are the lead institution for the sector's collaborative work in the area of inclusive growth and social impact and are seeking opportunities for the work in this area to logically connect with other outcomes , eg entrepreneurialism to ensure a coordinated approach.
8. The existing work underway and in development in relation to the UIF outcomes is also enhanced through the capacity that the increase in funding provides. The actions associated with the outcome that we are leading on have been clustered under the heading Inclusive Growth and focus on three key areas, all of which are collaborative – i) establishing a model for the engagement of universities with City Region Deals; ii) establishing inclusive models to support student and graduate enterprise; and ii) establishing inclusive models to support the development of social enterprises. All of these areas are focussed on maximising growth potential and leveraging connectivity with partners and stakeholders and sharing best practice to promote a comprehensive and consistent approach.

As this work has progressed, the opportunity to link the work of this cluster/outcome to that of Outcome 4 (Entrepreneurialism) has also evolved and joint workshops have been held in order to ensure consistency of approach between these areas.

The collaborative activity proposed to address this particular outcome will focus on delivering practical support for new enterprises through the proposed development of a regional network of University Enterprise Hubs that will enable the establishment of a collaborative, harmonised system to deliver practical support for company creation within a consistent national framework. Stirling will contribute directly to this development. The aim is to leverage expertise from all HEIs across Scotland and target support to university staff creating spin-out companies as well as new companies created by students and alumni entrepreneurs. This will also enable Stirling to build on its expertise and experience in particular areas, such as social enterprise, as mentioned above.

#### 9. Outcome One: Demand Stimulation

- We continue to believe strongly that demand for innovation in the Scottish business base can best be stimulated at scale by enhancing the understanding of, and appetite for, innovation within the workforce (including new start-up businesses). Therefore, we continue to focus on student and graduate enterprise and entrepreneurship. In the shorter term, we are continuing to increase contact and collaboration with established businesses and other employer organisations. (PA5)
- Our Student and Graduate Enterprise Programme is highly collaborative with strong links to enterprise organisations throughout Scotland, including the University's sponsorship of Converge Challenge and partnership with Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE). Our expanding programme looks continually for opportunities to strengthen and diversify partnerships and we will continue to do so to maximise the value and opportunities for student and graduate entrepreneurs to build skills and successful businesses. A number of initiatives under our Student and Graduate Enterprise Programme and wider Innovation and Enterprise strategy are designed to bring together aspiring entrepreneurs and role models from the Scottish business base for inspiration, collaboration and skills development. (PA5)
- Our pan-Scotland student and graduate sports business competition and UK-leading sports business incubator, the Sport Hive, delivers unique entrepreneurial support to a key Scottish economic sector. (PA5)
- We are committed to supporting mechanisms that facilitate greater academic-SME business collaboration and skills development, including active engagement with Interface, hosting the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre, and active participation with a number of other Innovation Centres. (PA5)

#### 10. Outcome Two: Simplification / Commercialisation

- We continue to be heavily involved and an active participant in fora and groupings across the sector focussing on innovation support.
- We are committed to adopting all simplified and standardised contracts terms, and the post project referral protocols, established through Universities Scotland Research & Commercialisation Directors Group and continue to work to facilitate their development and adoption across all Scottish Universities. (PA7 & PA8)
- We continue to pursue and enhance strategic engagement with key sectors including aquaculture, sport, health & behaviour, digital and social enterprise. We continue to sharpen our focus on these areas where the University can offer distinctive strengths to business and other relevant organisations. (PA6)

#### 11. Outcome Three: Simplification / Greater Innovation

- As host institution for the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre and as partners in the Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre, the Data Science Innovation Centre, the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre and the Oil and Gas Innovation Centre, we actively contribute to the sharing of sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy. (PA3)
- As highlighted under Outcome Two, we are committed to adopting all simplified and standardised contracts terms established through Universities Scotland Research & Commercialisation Directors Group and continue to work to facilitate their development and adoption across all Scottish Universities. (PA7)
- We continue to engage actively with professional development organisations (ARMA, PraxisUnico, AURIL) to co-ordinate, align and enhance the training and development support available to University research and innovation staff. The Research & Innovation Services team at Stirling make a particularly strong contribution to ARMA, providing the Deputy Chair and Director for Professional Development. (PA4)

#### 12. Outcome Four: Entrepreneurialism

- Our Innovation and Enterprise Strategy 2017-2021 is a key enabler of our strategic ambitions in this area.
- A key element of the Innovation and Enterprise Strategy is our Student and Graduate Enterprise Programme, which is undergoing expansion to support significant increase in the number of students supported to develop their entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial skills and to promote entrepreneurial opportunities to students during their studies. Within this scope of work, we include social enterprise, a distinctive area which resonates with the values of our students and staff. We continue to offer our Student Enterprise Programme to Forth Valley College students. (PA1)
- The repositioning of support delivered through the University of Stirling Innovation Park will not only significantly increase the number of start-up and scale-up businesses supported, but will also facilitate increased teaching and research connections and enhanced opportunities for student and graduate entrepreneur mentoring and incubation. (PA1 & PA2)
- We continue to work with the Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre and the life sciences, digital and creative sectors to continue to enhance work-based learning. (PA2)

#### 13. Outcome Five: International

- As outlined in our Strategic Plan 2016-2021, we have placed internationalisation at the heart of everything we do, in recognition that “to be a globally-connected university, we must continue to build and strengthen further our international links by: connecting with partner universities, organisations and people around the world; producing research with global relevance and impact; and graduating students as global citizens, who will play a leadership role in their communities, wherever they live”.
- As we extend our international partnerships, we will continue to ensure direct economic and social benefit through knowledge exchange, support for business innovation, skills training and in-country capacity building. Equally, we will continue to facilitate full access to participation in our enterprise and innovation programmes for our broad cohort of international students at Stirling. (Links to PA10 within Outcome 6)
- We continue to believe that our increasing range of international R&D collaborations will offer enhanced opportunities for Scottish businesses to partner internationally. Aquaculture is a particular area of focus for us in this regard. (PA11)

- We are also pursuing opportunities through channels focussed on ODA-related work, which provides another mechanism to contribute to the achievement of this outcome.

#### 14. Outcome Six: Inclusive Growth and Social Impact

- We continue to lead this work stream of the Universities Scotland agreed national outcomes activity and continue to build the network of community and third sector organisations we work closely with on access, outreach and innovation. We work closely with Social Enterprise Academy and other support organisations on projects that deliver real social impact. Through this workstream, we aim to enhance the structures and mechanisms to give more ambitious and effective connection of universities to social and cultural beneficiaries. (PA10)
- As outlined in our Strategic Plan 2016-2021, “Stirling is a place where everyone is treated with respect and where ability – not background – is valued. We are open with one another and support people with specific needs; we acknowledge difference, and respect the right of students and staff to hold differing views”. We will continue to work proactively to support this throughout all aspects of University business.

#### 15. Outcome Seven: Equality and Diversity

- We positively promote equality and diversity for all staff and students through all of our activities. This is supported through our continued participation, and progress in, initiatives including the Equality Action Forum, HR Excellence in Research, Athena Swan and the Aurora Programme.
- We have a keen interest in understanding where there may be barriers to fully diverse and equal engagement in innovation and enterprise. In particular, we are proactively investigating the opportunities that working collaboratively and being innovative afford us in tackling these issues.

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