
Expert Panel to assess Five-Year KEIF Strategies: Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has established an Expert Panel (“the Panel”) to assess the five-year KEIF strategies submitted by institutions. The Panel will provide insights and advice to the SFC Executive to inform feedback to institutions, supporting the finalisation of strategies. This will also aid better, more regular engagement between SFC and institutions as they deliver on their ambitions.
2. Strategies are expected to include forecast institutional performance indicators and support the development of new measures (beyond financial) that recognise the breadth of KE activity and its impact across the sector that contributes to Scottish Government priorities. The Panel will consider any new measures and their potential to be developed at a national level.
3. This assessment will help provide SFC with assurance that individual institutions have a long-term plan to best utilise their KEIF allocation and that they are committed to helping SFC better evidence the value of this investment. The Panel, drawing on their expertise, will add significant value to the consideration of strategies and their appropriateness in terms of scale and delivery.

Remit

4. The Expert Panel will have the following remit:
 - To read all KEIF strategies.
 - Individual members to consider and assess four or five strategies (assigned by the executive) in depth against the requirements set out in the strategy guidance and advise on areas that require further development/clarification/attention.
 - To provide advice to the Executive that will inform feedback to institutions where necessary and the finalisation of strategies prior to the approval of final university funding allocations for AY 2025-26 and the publication of strategies on SFC website in summer 2025.
5. It is expected that the Panel will arrive at final advice/insights through discussion reflecting panel views as a collective.

Outputs

6. The expected outputs of the Panel are:

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- Advice to inform feedback to institutions, prioritised where necessary.
 - Advice to SFC around potential new national metrics.
 - SFC to work with institutions to finalise strategies.
 - SFC R&I Directorate to confirm assurance against KE&I outcome as part of the Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model.

Timeline and Approach

7. Once the strategies have been submitted the Panel will convene twice, once virtually on 18 March 2025 (half a day) and in person for one full day on 27 March 2025.
8. Key information (five-year KEIF strategies, assessment guidance, strategy guidance, KEIF further information document and SFC early analysis) will be provided when they become available to allow adequate preparation time. Members will be expected to have read all paperwork and prepare for the two March meetings in advance.
9. The proposed timeline for the Panel's programme of work is:
 - Initial 1 hour meeting (virtual) to explain the background and aims of the assessment exercise and agree the terms of reference for the Panel (23 January 2025).
 - SFC to receive strategies by 31 January 2025. SFC to then share with panel via secure site by 17 February 2025.
 - Panel to receive SFC early analysis, assessment guidance, KEIF five-Year Strategy Guidance, and KEIF Further Information document to inform assessment and recommendations ahead of the calibration meeting on 18 March 2025.
 - A virtual calibration meeting (half a day) on 18 March 2025 to help hone approach for the in-person assessment meeting, perhaps prioritising specific themes.
 - In person assessment meeting to discuss/assess individual KEIF strategies. The Panel will then deliberate and agree recommendations to the Executive and advise on feedback to institutions where relevant.

Conflicts of Interest

10. Panel members must complete and return to the SFC Executive a Registration of Interests form and remind the Chair of any conflicts in discussion. This will be published on SFC website.

Confidentiality

11. The papers and information shared with the Panel and outputs and discussions provided by the Panel are confidential. Panel members must not disclose information concerning the KEIF Five-Year Strategy Assessment including documents, or Panel deliberations with anyone outside of the Panel members. Nor can Panel members use this confidential information for their own benefit or anyone else's benefit or disadvantage.

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12. Panel members should also not discuss the deliberations of the Panel with institutions, or other third parties. Enquiries from any institution or third party regarding the assessment procedure or outcome should be referred to SFC executive.
 13. Once the assessment has been completed, Panel members are required to destroy all documents and any copies made of them. Confidentiality must also be maintained after the assessment process has been completed.
 14. Information is subject to confidentiality and Freedom of Information requirements and will be managed in accordance with normal SFC practice.

Membership

15. The Panel will be Chaired by Professor Lesley Yellowlees, Chair of SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and SFC Board member. If the Chair should not be available Helen Cross, Director of Research and Innovation, SFC, will deputise.
16. Membership of the Panel will be made up from a diverse mix of skills and experience including representatives from Scottish Government, a broad range of UK research and knowledge exchange organisations and SFC Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee/Board members. It will comprise of:
 - **Prof Lesley Yellowlees (Chair)**, Chair of RKEC and SFC Board Member
 - **Dr Bethany Adams**, Associate Director of Knowledge Exchange Strategic Projects & Partnerships, Research England
 - **Dr Annette Bramley**, Director, N8 Research Partnership
 - **Tomas Coates Ulrichsen**, Director, UCI Policy Evidence Unit at the University of Cambridge
 - **Linda Galloway**, Strategic Lead for Science and Research, Scottish Government,
 - **Dr Joe Marshall**, CEO, National Centre for Universities and Business
 - **Tamsin Mann**, Associate Director Sector Engagement, Knowledge Exchange UK
 - **Dr Alison McIntosh**, Director, SULSA
 - **Dr Corinne Nguyen**, Senior Innovation and Engagement Manager, Medr
 - **Morag Watt**, Head of Innovation, Scottish Government

SFC Executive will provide secretariat support.