



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy

2025-26 to 2029-30

May 2025

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Section A: Overview

1. Institutional context

This section provides contextual information about the University of Edinburgh including our mission, economic context, institutional strengths and KE&I focus.

The University of Edinburgh conducts an extraordinary breadth of discovery research and is committed to nurturing excellence and innovation in each and every one of our disciplines.

The [Research and Innovation Strategy 2030](#) sets out the University's plans and ambitions, creating an environment in which our research community can flourish and innovate. This strategy drives a shared vision and delivery.

Our discovery research underpins solutions to the major problems facing the world, with a particular focus on the University's three core research missions outlined in the Research and Innovation Strategy: shaping the future of health and care; tackling the climate and environmental crisis; and harnessing data, digital and AI for public good.

Our strengths in key technologies such as data, digital and quantum, AI, and engineering biology are key to advancing our missions and addressing associated challenge areas effectively, now and into the future.

We have an ambitious innovation and engagement strategy, with plans to double the number of innovation-active staff through the introduction of a new innovation career path and increasing the creation of high-value spinouts.

We are also intensifying our engagement and expanding partnerships with public, professional, and industry partners to deliver and amplify social and economic impacts, locally, nationally, and globally.

We have a highly evolved research and innovation support network, from Edinburgh Research Office to Edinburgh Innovations, the University's commercialisation service, we provide support for our academic staff at all stages from idea to impact.

2. Overview of strategic ambitions

This section provides an overview of our 5-year approach to KE&I that will be supported by KEIF. In this section we highlight the broad areas which we are targeting and describe how KEIF funding aligns with our institutional mission and internal strategies.

The University's KE&I strategy, part of the R&I strategy 2030, has specific KE&I goals to:

- Increase the number of innovation-active academic staff by 200.
- Expand strategic partnerships with emphasis on the three missions: Future Health and Care, Data Digital and AI and Climate and sustainability.
- Cultivate an entrepreneurial ecosystem that leverages commercial opportunities arising from our research.
- Create new incubation spaces informed by mapping our space offering, and real-time understanding of space requirements.
- Amplify our policy impact, through specialised support for researchers across the university in areas with potential policy impact.
- Strengthen public engagement both through strategic partnerships with communities and organisations and involvement of members of the public in our research.

University of Edinburgh activities in KE&I are broad and ambitious. KEIF funding will contribute to capacity building for a range of interventions aligned with SFC and Scottish Government priorities including:

- Development, roll out and implementation of a sector leading Innovation Career Pathway that develops academics and engages them in innovation, providing a blueprint for establishment in other universities.
- Increased focus on consultancy to amplify research expertise, spotlighting Scotland and increasing income.
- Sector specialist expertise to support acceleration in high value venture creation.
- Shared service function allowing Scotland's university ecosystem to benefit from infrastructure and skills.
- Sector engagement in priority clusters to drive industrial partnership.
- Strengthened leadership and development of creative platforms to engage and involve the public with our research and innovation.
- Tailored support for research to inform policy at all stages from entry level engagement to leadership through public appointments.

3. Alignment to Scottish Government priorities

In this section we describe how our KEIF strategy aligns with Scottish Government priorities, such as the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and Scotland's National Innovation Strategy.

The University's KEIF strategy aligns with SNIS programmes of action specifically regarding:

1. Building Successful Innovation Clusters;

- 3. Innovation-led Entrepreneurship and Commercialisation Programme; (Alignment with SNIS program 3 also supports SNSET program 2. People and Culture.)
- 5. Innovation Scorecard.

1. Building Successful Innovation Clusters

Development of major regional clusters in our mission align to the SNIS Innovation Clusters and for which partnership across Scotland is critical:

- Health and Life sciences: we will work with partners to accelerate development of the flagship Edinburgh BioQuarter as a national Scottish innovation district. Success of spinouts and major industrial partnerships has now reached critical mass so work to develop space, partnerships and major propositions for investment are a key focus.
- Data & Digital Technologies: we will continue to deliver the Data Driven Innovation (DDI) programme with impact across education, research, technology adoption, data use and entrepreneurship, supporting sectors such as AI, Fintech and health data. The DDI Program has reached an inflection point with all five hubs on stream and the next phase catalysing significant increase in collaborative and commercialisation activity.
- Energy Transition: we will continue in the research and translation of research, both into existing businesses and into new company creation. Climate and sustainability are being developed as a key anchor of the regional innovation action plan to regenerate Forth Green Freeport (FGF) with a focus on energy transition. In addition, we will accelerate the key collaboration of Scotland's universities around Scotland Beyond Net Zero (SBNZ).

3. Innovation-led Entrepreneurship and Commercialisation Programme

Our focus on entrepreneurship and creation of high value sustainable ventures underscores cluster creation and supports theme 3 of the SNIS and theme 2 of SNSET by unlocking the research base and turning the dial on high value spin out creation.

This includes high impact startups and IP rich spinouts including [MiAlgae](#) and [Roslinct](#) that retain links with the research ecosystem then scale in situ while attracting investment and further industrial engagement and thus drive cluster growth. We are renewing our IP and licencing strategy, enhancing sector specialist venture creation support and planning the next phase of growth of our flagship investment arm, Old College Capital (OCC).

5. Innovation Scorecard

Within each cluster area we will focus on the innovation journey to unlock research to commercialisation. We will modernise the technology transfer pathway around the concept/convert and commercialise gated steps and our focus on this development will provide opportunity for a shared national tool.

Section B: KE&I Capacity

4. Platform Grant

In this section we explain how the Platform Grant will be used to support and enhance capacity and improve performance in KE&I.

The University confirms match funding to improve KE&I. This currently includes over £10m investment in Edinburgh Innovations providing infrastructure in which the platform grant can have maximum impact and leverage in the interventions catalysed across the strategy. In addition the University currently invests ca £3m in funding ca 55 posts working on various aspects of knowledge exchange, innovation and impact within Edinburgh Research Office and embedded within the college and school structure.

The grant itself will build critical capacity and performance in:

- The development and support for a new Innovation Career Pathway that supports academics innovation journey from Potential Innovator to Innovation Leader.
- Capacity to focus on growing consultancy income through a dedicated team and new capacity.
- Venture sector specialist expertise to support acceleration in high value venture creation. Developing expertise to build deal flow from scratch in Life sciences; Deeptech; AI and Sustainability in addition to investor and founder networks.
- Shared service function allowing Scotland's university ecosystem to benefit from infrastructure and skills. Particularly in shared modernisation of processes to acceleration.
- Sector engagement in priority clusters to drive industrial partnership through regional, national and international partnership development.
- Public engagement capacity, to inform, engage and involve communities and members of the public based on our research and innovation.

5. Overall capacity for KE&I

In this section we have provided staff data relating to staff directly supported by KEI and those who have KE&I as a significant part of their role, including professional services staff and those in academic/leadership roles.

Edinburgh Innovations employs approximately 161 FTE professional staff dedicated to KE&I support. EI delivers academic engagement programmes across all areas of the University, offering a fully integrated support service which encompasses translation and collaborative research support, IP and licensing support and company creation support at all stages.

This includes staff involved in:

- Innovation development and licencing (to surface translational ideas for development from the research base).
- Consultancy (providing consulting expertise to external stakeholders).
- Technology Transfer support (supporting all elements of the invention disclosure and IP management process through to commercialisation).
- Licensing support.

- Venture creation (through staff and student startups and staff spinouts).
- Industrial partnership support (engaging with external partners in our priority sectors on a regional, national and international basis)
- Staff who support the operational running of the service provision.
- EI also hosts a further ca 35 staff across Fintech Scotland and Interface.

The University employ ca 55 professional staff to support knowledge exchange and impact, based in the Edinburgh Research Office, Colleges and Schools including Informatics Ventures and Edinburgh Futures Institute. Of these ca 30 FTE are dedicated to public and policy engagement. This includes colleagues designing and delivering public events, school outreach, public and patient involvement, and academic engagement with government and legislators.

Professional Services colleagues work closely with academic leadership for KE&I at all levels of the organisation, including the VP of Research and Enterprise. The Colleges of Science & Engineering and Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences both have an Associate Dean for Research Impact, with each of their Schools (18 in total) having an Associate Director/Champion for Impact (typically 0.2FTE). The College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine has a 0.5 FTE Dean of Engagement and Innovation and is in the process of appointing specialist Associate Deans as well as School based leadership positions for engagement and innovation.

Section C: Outcome Grant activities

6. KE metric activity

In this section we give narrative on our ambitions and approaches to SFC KE metric areas. This information is supported by our KE return template, and describes how our activities and resources will be prioritised to deliver on Scottish Government ambitions.

The University of [Edinburgh's R&I strategy](#) sets ambitious innovation targets to 2030 that are reflected in the aligned strategy of Edinburgh Innovations, which can be provided on request. KEIF funding will contribute to capacity building for a range of interventions aligned with SFC priorities including:

- Development of an Innovation Career Pathway to underpin capacity building and entrepreneurial ecosystem development. This sector flagship pathway will provide a dedicated career trajectory for innovation active academics. The pathway aims to increase the number of innovation active academics by 200 by 2030, building capacity to increase innovation activity. It will also provide a blueprint to roll out across the sector and offers high impact potential to other higher education institutions.
- Increasing the depth and quality of deal flow (supporting cluster development) and licencing income to £10m. This is being initiated via a new process of “concept, convert and commercialise”, modernising the process of innovation development and licencing to unlock research for impact. Development of new licencing and patent strategy and review of IP policy to accelerate and ease of commercialisation (in line with USIT). This will drive increases in licencing and consultancy over the next five years

- Increasing consulting income, building capacity and developing areas of sector expertise (agritech and professional services) and developing capability for shared services across HEIs. This will be achieved by appointment of a Head of Consultancy and a dedicated consultancy team. (Consulting income has increased from £5m to £16m over the past 6 years and we are looking to double this over the next five years through the development of new growth areas, new income streams, provision of external services and proactive industrial engagement.).
- Building industrial income via major partnerships driven by sector leads that can engage clusters, understand market needs and co-create major collaborative partnerships working across Scotland's trade bodies and stakeholder groups (i.e. Fintech Scotland; Life Sciences Scotland). This will be achieved by wider roll out of the sector specialist model under the DDI that has already proved valuable in catalysing regional, national and international relationships. The value of signed industrial awards has remained at £30m for the past 5 years and this initiative is anticipated to increase industrial awards.
- Focus on cluster and regional development with emphasis on strategic partnerships with universities and regional locations. This will be achieved by expansion of the sector leads already successfully established under the DDI program and multi stakeholder program teams across the university and wider ecosystem developing flagship regional Cluster programs (Including Edinburgh BioQuarter; DDI; Forth Green Freeport; Scotland Beyond Net Zero).
- Increase high value spinouts through expert creation teams, partnerships with VCs and greater access to PoC. Increase quality and depth of deal flow of spinouts and startups. Accelerate access to capital via growth of Old College Capital from £70m to £200m over the period. Embed adoption of USIT. This will be achieved by the appointment of new Director of Venture Creation. Focus on will be driving quality and scale of spinout creation reflected in the forecast increase of investment at launch. While absolute numbers should increase in the short term (until 2030) the focus is on quality that provides opportunity for regional impact over number.

7. Graduate start-ups and spin-outs/Entrepreneurial Support

In this section we describe our ambitions and approaches to entrepreneurial support and how this is reflected in graduate start-up and/or spin-outs survival rates. We describe how our activities and resources will be prioritised to deliver on Scottish Government ambitions.

The University of Edinburgh has an excellent track record creating 127 companies in 2023/24 ranking 8th nationally (UK) in spinout creation (Beauhurst). Our focus to 2030 is to increase the quality of spinout creation as a key vehicle to unlock research, create societal, regional and economic impact. This is underscored by recruitment of a key leadership role "Director of Venture Creation" in EI early in 2025 to drive a coherent University-wide program.

KEIF support will be utilised to build capacity across a range of initiatives:

- Inspire students and staff to engage with and develop an entrepreneurial mind-set with a focus on PhDs, Early Career Researchers and EDI. We will focus on quality and growth to create businesses of high impact: The University provides extensive entrepreneurial support to students through EIs Student Enterprise Teams and in-faculty initiatives. New initiatives supported include a) Development of a new E (entrepreneurship) Zone in the Bayes centre to engage staff and students in entrepreneurship b) Establishment and roll out of the new

[Enterprise Portal](#) for community network building and to provide a one stop shop for all things entrepreneurial related. c) new Innovation career hub to underpin the Innovation Career Pathway d) Power Her Up – a 10-week program to encourage women into venture creation. e) Signatory to the [Pathways Forward Pledge](#)

- Running a 3-month annual Summer Start up Accelerator Program to support students with their business ideas
- EI offers support across all types of enterprise with many businesses driven by the United Nation's SDGs. We will provide high value support to those student enterprises with high potential for investment, job creation, long-term growth and sustainability. The flagship exemplar being MiAlgae, a student start-up and a recent finalist at the Earthshot prize.
- Build our entrepreneurship program through the Data Driven Innovation programme that will include a series of initiatives around entrepreneurial mind-set development, leading to a more innovative culture in key academic areas. This will scale across the DDI platform as all five hubs are now live. We will continue to build the [AI Accelerator](#) and [Venture Builder](#) incubators that provide business support and skills development to entrepreneurs across the UK. There will be an emphasis on partnership (Barclays Eagle Labs and Cancer Research UK) and on the quality of businesses supported.
- Develop a new program to increase spinout creation. Unlocking the research base to develop high quality companies built around the licencing of intellectual property offers significant potential for regional economic impact and supports cluster building. We will support this via:
 - development of a specialist spinout venture creator program delivering sector EiR expertise to build IP based businesses; deepen engagement to our extensive investor networks, market experts, commercial champions and mentors to harness expertise and skills development from creation
 - build a Founder network supporting our entrepreneurs with access to those who have already been successful.
- Develop funding options to provide greater access to Proof-of-Concept funding at early stage and scaling funding for growth working with other university and investor partners as growth plans for OCC are developed.
- Embed USIT guidance and continue to work across HEI to develop tools and models of best practice. The University has adopted the University Spinout Investment Terms (USIT) guide recommendations on deal terms for spinouts. We will continue to embed this in the Scottish ecosystem in which three Scottish companies have currently signed up to the recommendations of the UK Spin out Review. We are also engaging with SetSquared regards development of a broader toolkit for spinout support to benefit the UK ecosystem akin to USIT.

Section D: Wider KE&I activities

8. Wider Societal Impact

In this section we provide narrative on our ambitions and our approaches to activities that are likely to be non-income generating which add societal and economic value to Scotland and beyond. This includes non-income generating KE&I activity, public engagement and public policy.

Our mission is to ensure our research and innovation enhances lives in Edinburgh, Scotland and beyond. Through outreach and events, we inspire the public, gain new perspectives and built trust in research and technology. In our 2023-24 HEBCI return, we reported 934,889 attendees at our events and the KEIF will continue to support targeted programmes in schools and centres including the Edinburgh Futures Institute. We will focus on four flagship initiatives over the next five years:

1. **300th Anniversary of the Faculty of Medicine (2026).** This milestone allows us to reflect on our past, mark our learning and achievements, and reflect on what the next 300 years could bring. We'll connect disciplines, education and technology to address healthcare inequities and improve health and wellbeing through a series of events.
2. **Edinburgh Science Festival:** We will formalise a strategic partnership to deliver top-tier content, based on our research excellence. We will collaborate with Dynamic Earth and the National Museums of Scotland.
3. **Edinburgh Fringe Festival:** Building on the success of "Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas", we aim to create a new programme of research-based performances in partnership with creative practitioners at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. We will increase engagement with local communities through Fringe audience programmes.
4. **Autumn Festivals:** we will elevate the profile of events like Books and Belief, ESRC Festival of Social Science and Beyond Human Festivals under the new umbrella "University of Edinburgh at the Autumn festivals".

Launching in 2026, our Community Plan 2030 focuses on impactful research and outreach. We aim to prevent health issues, enhance education, support homelessness pathways, address social and economic disadvantage and contribute to biodiversity and cultural heritage. Our Participatory Research Network and Resource Library, launched in 2024, boosts collaborations with local communities.

We have increased our investment in Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), especially in health technology research. In 2025, the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine will appoint an Associate Dean/Head of PPIE to strengthen leadership and coordination across the University.

Aligned with our Research and Innovation Strategy 2030, we've bolstered policy engagement by developing training and resources, offering bespoke support, and piloting a policy fellowship with the Scottish Government.

Over the next five years we aim to enhance our support for colleagues who hold or aspire for senior policy leadership roles in Scotland and the UK. We will also harness our digital and AI expertise for

policy and public service, leveraging the Edinburgh Futures Institute and building on centres such as the Scottish Administrative Data Research Centre, Smart Data Foundry and the Scottish Prevention Hub.

9. Collaboration

Here we outline our specific ambitions and approaches to working collaboratively across the sector and alongside SFC supported innovation infrastructure, as well as detailing how we collaborate and contribute to Scottish Government priorities ensuring a more cohesive KE&I system.

The University is dedicated to enhancing the Scottish higher education ecosystem by embedding best practices and demonstrating strong leadership. We are committed to fostering innovation, collaboration and public engagement, playing a pivotal role in nurturing Scotland's educational and entrepreneurial landscape.

Innovation and Career development: The University is pioneering the UK's first Innovation Career Pathway with an Innovation Competency Framework which serves as a blueprint that can be embedded into organisations to support researchers pursuing innovation careers. It is already garnering significant support from external stakeholders.

Supporting networks and collaborations: We actively support innovation and entrepreneurial networks across Scotland, hosting and collaborating with initiatives like The Data Lab and Fintech Scotland, as well as the Innovation Centre hosted by the University. Our strong ties with Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Government aim to align efforts and maximise benefits for Edinburgh and Scotland. This includes working with SE's High Growth Spinout Programme to scale spinout creation.

Industry engagement: the University invests in national and international industry engagement, boosting networks with businesses and investors. Recent engagements include Moderna and Johnson & Johnson and investors such as Boeringer-Ingelheim. We are committed to showcasing Scottish strengths within a vibrant UK tech ecosystem, contributing to projects like the Scottish Universities Venture Fund and Scotland Beyond Net Zero.

Conferences and events: we continue to host the [EIE conference](#), a major investor event highlighting Scotland's strengths. Our collaborations extend to the broader Scottish university community to advance innovation and entrepreneurship.

Leadership and advocacy: The University's leadership in advocacy and influence for Scotland is evident through our membership of Russell Group, 6U, TenU, and LERU. EI has acted as part of the TenU to raise the issue of Proof-of-Concept Funding and facilitate the representation of Scottish Enterprise High Growth Spinout Programme as a key member of the UK working group. This includes training around best practice (USIT) and other national toolkits in which it is supporting development (IP toolkit with SetSquared).

Public engagement: As part of the Scottish Engagement Network, we facilitate sharing best practices amongst professionals across Scottish HEIs. We will host a part-time admin support post for [ScotPen](#), funded by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (pilot for 12 months 2025-26). We continue to work collaboratively with the other Edinburgh universities through the [Edinburgh Beltane for Public Engagement](#), including leading our joint programme at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Research and policy connections: We actively contribute to [the Scottish Policy Research Exchange](#) (SPRE) and [the Scottish Parliament Academic Network](#) to strengthen ties between research and policy. This includes hosting a posted funded by the Economic and Social Research Council based in the Scottish Parliament and participating in the UK-wide [Universities Policy Engagement Network](#) to engage with the UK and devolved governments.

10. Regional approaches

This section describes the role the University of Edinburgh plays at a regional level including engagement with colleges and the potential for shared services.

The regional impact that our institution plays is a key part of our civic ethos. The University's R&I strategy 2030 reinforces outputs that drive regional economic and societal growth.

Our cluster programs include strong partnership benefits for regional development including:

- Regional Innovation Action Plan to develop ForthGreen Freeport (partners: Fife College; Heriot Watt;
- Edinburgh BioQuarter (EBQ) (partners including Dundee; Glasgow) as a life science district for Scotland.
- DDI program (partners including QMU; Heriot Watt) including expansion of Scotland's Venture Builder in partnership with Barclays Eagle Labs and Cancer Research Horizons.

The [Venture Builder Incubator](#) exemplifies the shared models of access that have national benefit to be embedded in our regional programs.

Our venture creation programs create depth and quality of deal flow, high quality companies and jobs at scale within the regional ecosystem. Working in partnership will develop sector specific access to expertise; access to Proof of Concept funding; development of the concept; create and commercialise journey and networking and training events. Skills development, scalability and job creation are regional outputs of enhancing deal flow quality and depth.

KEIF will support the University to develop a shared service model, enabling the wider HEI sector in Scotland to benefit from the University's considerable expertise and infrastructure. This will position Scotland and the North as a critical component for the UK to be a global tech and entrepreneurial ecosystem. We aim to pilot shared services in consultancy and Tech Transfer support, in addition to venture creation, building on previous pilots.

Section E: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

11. Embedding and promoting EDI

In this section we demonstrate how we promote and advance equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across our strategy. We set out our approach to drive inclusive KE&I and suggested national EDI measures that can be developed to evidence progress in the future.

We are committed to inclusive Knowledge Exchange and Innovation by promoting equity and targeting underrepresented groups to ensure equality, rather than simply providing equal opportunities.

Diversity and accessibility: we ensure diverse representation in event speakers and innovations, and improve accessibility, including BSL interpretation and disability adjustments. We are delighted to see more requests for such adjustments to meet the needs of people with disability for internal and external events.

EDI programmes: In 2023-24 we launched the Elevate programme for women of colour and Climate Leaders for women in environmental fields to increase EDI research and innovation leadership. We have seen positive outcomes already and have ambitions to deliver similar programmes in the next five years.

Addressing bias: we monitor selection for external calls with large volumes like the UKRI Future Leader fellowship scheme. We've identified that in terms of sex and ethnic background, the selected candidates reflect the population that applied for the call. We've identified fewer applications from black researchers than we would expect and are investigating this and how to address it.

Pathways Pledge: we have signed the Pathways Pledge, a national initiative focused on reducing the gender gap in entrepreneurship. Our first commitment is to improve data collection on female entrepreneurs across the University. Over the next 12 months, we will establish a consistent approach across all enterprise groups and the data will inform targeted interventions, with findings summarised in an annual report to guide future enterprise support. Our second commitment is to host two annual EDI awareness events to build understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion in entrepreneurship among staff, student societies, and ecosystem partners. The outcomes will be used to inform follow-up actions that support the wider dissemination of EDI principles across the University's enterprise ecosystem.

EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account Programme: we strive for accessibility and trust across all groups, making application and review processes more inclusive, including making improvements to application documents, review procedures, reviewer appointment and representation, inclusivity in communication and considering the needs of those with other responsibilities, e.g., carers. To improve processes and broaden the data to additional protected characteristics we are setting up an automated report that will monitor demographic diversity of applicants and awardees drawing from grants and HR management systems, allowing us to compare to all staff demographic data.

We would like to understand the specific EDI barriers to engaging with KE&I better and are conducting a review of EDI focussed on applicants to all our IAA. Findings from this will inform actions both in relation to the way we run internal schemes and promote an inclusive KE&I culture more widely.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is appended at the end of this document.

Section F: KE&I Culture

13. Promoting positive KE&I culture

Here we describe the approach we will take to support a positive KE&I culture over the next five years and methods of measuring this.

The University is committed to building a positive KE&I culture in line with the values and behaviours stated in our [Research Cultures Action Plan](#).

The University is revising the academic promotions criteria to better capture *collegiality and citizenship*; as well as *external engagement, innovation and impact*. This will formalise Innovation as a pathway to career progression alongside that of research and teaching, in line with the Innovation Career competency framework. A programme of activities will ensure the new criteria are socialised across the institution including among those mentoring and supporting colleagues.

We celebrate and recognise KE&I through the annual [Research Impact Prizes](#) as part of our Impact Festival inaugurated in 2024. Prizes are awarded in five categories, all focusing on behaviours that support a positive culture: Partnership, Responsible Engagement and Innovation, Impact Enabler, Engagement Newcomer and Team Culture.

Our approach to KE&I culture also includes reflection on how we engage externally, ensuring our partnerships are equitable based on mutual benefit. This is a core focus of the Participatory Research Network and underpins our PPIE as well as work with international partners.

Another initiative to build consideration of the external environment into our culture is our sector leading framework for Responsible Innovation, encouraging PIs to reflect on societal implications of their innovation; how to mitigate any potential harm; and embed this into their practice. Developed as part of the UKRI Impact Acceleration Accounts, funders have shown interest in this and we will mainstream this in our KE&I culture over the next five years.

14. Knowledge Exchange Concordat Principles

Edinburgh University is fully aligned to the eight guiding principles of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.

The University currently measures KE targets including through formal KPIs reporting to EI board, through its SFC returns and HEBCI returns; and progress reports on the Research & Innovation strategy to Research Strategy Group and University Executive.

Section G: Any other information

Here we provide further relevant KE&I information not otherwise covered through KEIF supported activity.

The University is actively working with other Scottish Universities to identify and establish funds to support innovative new companies. There are likely to be several funding solutions to be created to cater for particular sector needs. The University has already committed significant resources to its in-house fund, Old College Capital, which is now reviewing its growth plans, plus the development of international investor networks which will have benefit to the wider ecosystem. KEIF will be used to support the development of the options.

EI has proposed to SFC and Scottish Government (through its enterprise package) a specific shared service program to embed high functioning sectoral EiRs that can work across Scottish HEIs to identify concepts that can be developed from scratch to form high growth ventures. In addition, to develop the support networks to these company founders providing skills and training as well as access to sector specific investor relationships. This underpins a national focus to accelerate high value deal flow and learn from best practice to embed at scale. KEIF will specifically be used to support this initiative if funded.

Equality Impact Assessment Template

EqlA covers policies, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

A. Key Information	
Policy/practice name:	Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy
General background/aims of policy/practice:	<p>To allow SFC to better understand and articulate the value of broader Knowledge Exchange and innovation activities to Scotland and how national metrics can be developed to further recognise these and improve the KEIF allocation model.</p> <p>KEIF strategies, annual reporting and case studies will form a key part in improving SFC's evidence base, demonstrating the value of KEIF within the broader Research and Innovation landscape.</p>
School/Dept:	Edinburgh Innovations
Sign off date:	24 February 2025
Review date:	Autumn 2025

B. Reason for EqlA	(check one)
New policy/ practice is proposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Change to existing policy/practice is proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe in Section D below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Who will most impacted by this proposal?					
Consider carefully how your proposal will impact both positively and negatively on people from different groups.					
Consider the 9 protected characteristics as below in your proposal. There may be other identity characteristics that you wish to also include in your impact assessment. It is expected that you will consider all equality groups for impact. Please indicate below (with a tick) which groups you feel will be most affected by your proposal.					
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race (including ethnicity and nationality)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and civil partnership¹	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief (including no religion or belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy and maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>				

D. Consideration of Impact

Show your considerations of how all of the above protected characteristics may be impacted. The following prompts will help you to reflect:

- What information and evidence do I have about the needs of relevant equality groups – is this sufficient to fully assess impact?
- Could this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, or create barriers or less favourable treatment for particular groups and how can you mitigate any negative impacts?
- Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?
- How can communication of the policy/practice be made accessible to all relevant groups?

As part of the Scottish Funding Council's new Outcome Framework and Assurances Model, we are required to produce an EqlA for our Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy. This is a new requirement from SFC.

The University of Edinburgh is committed to ensuring that our activities do not disproportionately disadvantage any of our staff or students, particularly individuals or groups who have a Protected Characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and that they proactively advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. We adhere to the University's guidelines and policies on embedding EDI into our activities, aligning to the University's [EDI Strategy and Equality Outcomes](#). The development of our new KEIF strategy document has EDI embedded in all our activities.

It is not possible to isolate and assess our KEIF activities from the rest of our Edinburgh Innovation KE&I activities and therefore the impacts in this EqlA cover the breadth of our work programmes in this space.

The University's KE&I Strategy is part of the University's [R&I Strategy 2030](#), in which we provide details of specific KE&I goals. Our KEIF strategy does not capture all our activity in relation to protected characteristics, but it does contain commitments that can be explicitly linked to these:

- Section 2: Overview of strategic ambitions (specific reference to increasing the number of innovation-active academic staff by 200, enabling and innovation culture, expanding strategic partnerships, building industry engagement, cultivating an entrepreneurial ecosystem, amplifying our policy impact through specialised support across the University, and strengthening public engagement, including with our communities and members of the public).
- Section 4: KE&I Capacity (specific reference to shared services function, sector engagement in priority clusters and public engagement capacity)
- Section 5: Overall capacity of KE&I (specific reference to staff at the University involved in KE&I, offering support services, including research support, IP and licensing support and company creation support, and Professional Services colleagues supporting academic activity)

- Section 6: KE metric activity (specific reference to capacity building, development of Innovation Career Pathway and a focus on cluster and regional development with emphasis on strategic partnerships with universities and regional locations)
- Section 7: Graduate start-ups and spin-outs/entrepreneurial support (specifically how KEIF will be used to build capacity for staff and students, access to Proof-of-Concept funding)
- Section 8: Wider societal impact (including our drive to ensuring our research and innovation engages with and improve the lives of individuals in Edinburgh/Scotland/beyond, outreach and events programme, engaging with communities, participating in public events, including outreach, and engaging with communities and people with lived experience)

In the development and EqIA assessment of all of our KE&I and KEIF activities we have not identified any activity which will have negative or unintended consequences or which will be a barrier to advance equality. Our activities actively promote equality of opportunity, with some areas we positively targeted protected groups (e.g. women/gender/race).

E. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision.	(check one)
Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects which cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>

F. Action and Monitoring

Describe any actions you will take to address the findings of this EqIA.

- How can I involve equality groups or communities in the ongoing monitoring, review and potential future development, of this policy/practice?

Describe how the policy/practice will be monitored going forward, to ensure that impact is frequently reviewed. Make sure you add a review date in Section A above.

All our activities are monitored, and this is done through wider University EDI activities. Edinburgh Innovations is an active member of our Corporate Services EDI Working Group. We have recently launched an Employee Handbook detailing all employee-related policies. All policies are consistent with University standards and have been assessed through an EDI lens.

We are in the process of establishing our Edinburgh Innovations Diversity Working Group, which will be tasked with the development and implementation of our Edinburgh Innovations EDI

Strategy. We will develop metrics to allow us to assess and measure our activity, progress and actions in this space. To date we have not surfaced any issues which would have negative or unintended consequence to any protected group.

In our first report on our KEIF strategy due in Autumn 2025, we will reflect on EDI and if we identify any activities which require development or a change to our policy or practice, we will note this.

The requirement to report by Autumn 2025 may however not give us sufficient time to properly assess the impact which our KEIF strategy has had on our communities. Thus, in our subsequent comprehensive report to SFC due in 2026 we will report on our delivery against KEIF strategies and will this allow us time to properly reflect on our EDI activities embedded in our strategy.