

**Outcome Agreement between
Edinburgh Napier University and
the Scottish Funding Council
2023-2024**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Outcome Agreement presented here between Edinburgh Napier University and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for 2023/24 has been developed to provide assurances on the use of SFC funding and captures at a high-level Edinburgh Napier's ambitions, impact, and outcomes.

2. Institutional Context and Financial Sustainability

- 2.1 Edinburgh Napier University is focused on the delivery of our strategy, [Shaping our Future: Driving Distinctiveness](#), and its three strategic objectives: 1) building careers to create opportunities, 2) growing networks to connect communities, and 3) advancing knowledge to deliver impact, underpinned by a commitment to sustainable growth, embracing the achievement of net zero carbon in our operations by 2030.
- 2.2 The ambitions of our strategy have a strong alignment with the Scottish Government's national priority of creating a wellbeing economy that delivers prosperity for all of Scotland's people and places through the National Strategy for Economic Transformation. Over the course of the academic year 2023/24, the University will focus on ten priorities which are aligned to our strategic objectives and the Scottish Funding Council's 2022-27 Strategic Plan. The priorities are described in more detail in the relevant sections of the Outcome Agreement and are summarised in Appendix A.
- 2.3 The continued generation of an underlying surplus demonstrates the University's commitment to ensuring its financial health and sustainability while we plan to deliver our ambitious capital investment across our estate and digital environment, enabling our teaching & learning, research & innovation, and internationalisation strategies. Our financial strategy will support delivery of our key operational challenges in line with our core academic strategies and to ensure that we have high levels of student and staff satisfaction. To deliver on our financial strategy, we will ensure the 'basket' of financial sustainability metrics is always at a weighted, acceptable level, maintaining access to liquidity that will allow us to meet our obligations, even under stress.

Meeting our student number targets

- 2.4 External factors have affected the University's ability to fill our student places, particularly direct entrants from college and home postgraduate taught students; we have consistently achieved our UGFT targets. These challenges are over and above the challenges faced by Edinburgh Napier following Brexit and the impact of the pandemic on the cost of living and attractiveness of study for existing and potential new students. The University is committed to achieving its delivery of SFC-funded student places and our plan is to deliver this over the following two years. By 2025/26, we forecast that we will be delivering all our SFC student places at both undergraduate and postgraduate taught level. To achieve this, there are several strands of work that we are prioritising this year:
 1. **We are revising and implementing additions to our Taught Postgraduate academic portfolio** while making our offer more flexible for those studying while working to ensure that this is forward-facing and meets employer demand for skills. New courses are being developed in the subject areas of data, analytics, design, digital business, creative industries, and clinical health technologies.
 2. **We will increase our recruitment of home students at both postgraduate and undergraduate levels.** Our skills-focused postgraduate taught portfolio will be grown through enhancing our marketing and conversion activities and attendance at postgraduate open days has doubled in the last year. We are also actively engaging with our final year undergraduate students who wish to progress onto postgraduate study with a scholarship discount on tuition fees. We have reviewed and implemented changes to our undergraduate entry qualifications for 2024/25 that are not deemed to be essential for student success with the impact that this will increase and widen the intake of students. For example, removing national 5 requirements, and making more offers in selecting subject areas where there is increased competition. Increasing the number of

offers we make to students and improving the conversion of applicants will maximise the potential number of students who study at Edinburgh Napier.

3. **We will improve our retention and progression of students.** For 2023/24, we have seen an improvement in year 1 student continuation in particular, and this will continue - we are anticipating that our continuation of first year students will improve by c.2-3% per year, and by 2025/26, we will be back to pre-pandemic levels. Fuller details of the student retention plan are in section four of this document and the focus for 2023/24 is on:
 - Student community, engagement and academic development.
 - Staff community, engagement and development.
 - Creating effective and purposeful curriculum design with a focus on assessment and feedback.
4. **We are continuing to build on existing relationships with colleges** to improve direct entrant conversion at a university and academic school level which includes strategic initiatives with both West Lothian College and Borders College to create new programmes.

3. Fair Access

- 3.1 Edinburgh Napier is committed to supporting the delivery of the ambitions and targets set out by the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA), and in doing this, ensure that our activity, policies, and processes support fair access, student success, meet the needs of learners, and are aligned to the economic and social needs of the local, regional, and national economies. In support of achieving the CoWA targets, we are aiming towards having 16% of our Scottish undergraduates entering from MD20 postcodes over the next three years. We will achieve this through a set of actions that increase student applications, increase offer-making enabled through our contextual admissions process, and support student success through enhanced support for widening access students. We will work collaboratively in partnership with local schools, and other partners such as SHEP, LEAPS, and the Hub for Success.
- 3.2 Our work with the National Schools Programme continues through LEAPS where we have engaged with the new Director and included a campus visit to meet key stakeholders and provide an update on our work in this area. We are represented on the LEAPS Management Group and have contributed to the recent mapping exercise that will inform future LEAPS activities in Southeast Scotland, including a newly refreshed teachers conference. Our outreach staff have supported with LEAPS S6 interviews, achieving one of the highest numbers of pupils supported this year.
- 3.3 Once at Edinburgh Napier, the University has successfully embedded a triage approach to supporting widening participation students. Dedicated support is available during application, induction, and while at university. Our central Widening Participation Team works in partnership with academic subject areas to provide post transition support, including to MD20 students, college direct entrants, carers, and veterans through a range of channels including emails, newsletters, and remote 1:1 appointments.
- 3.4 The University has sought to be a leader in the sector in supporting the aspirations of care-experienced students. We host the [Hub for Success](#), and support the work of the Hub team to deliver a regional approach to ensure that Care Experienced learners are able to access and succeed in their further and higher education studies in a supported, consistent, and coordinated way. Established in 2018/19, the Hub for Success works collaboratively with other Universities and Colleges in Edinburgh and has supported 337 students in getting into and/or returning to further or higher education. The huge impact of the Hub for Success has been seen at Edinburgh Napier with the number of care experienced students entering Edinburgh Napier increasing from 22 in 2017/18 to 61 entrants in 2023/24.

4. Quality learning and teaching

- 4.1 Edinburgh Napier degree programmes and short courses provide a strong academic framework alongside an applied and practical approach that enables our students to develop skills and graduate attributes that will serve them well for successful careers. Our [Learning and Teaching Strategy 2020-2025](#) is focused on building an increasingly strong culture of excellence in learning and teaching that is recognised externally and is highly relevant to contemporary issues, such as addressing the climate crisis, and societal and economic wellbeing. Enhancing our curriculum to deliver on our mission to provide high quality learning and teaching is one of our ten priorities for 2023/24.
- 4.2 Our last visit from the Quality Assurance Agency was in December 2019 – a summary of the review can be found [here](#) - our next review visit is due to take place in December 2023. The outcome from the previous Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) was positive and found that Edinburgh Napier University has effective arrangements for managing academic standards along with plans for providing an excellent student experience and student success. All Institutional Learning Reviews which have taken place since the pandemic have included a focus on the student experience of learning and teaching in the online space, and more recently on the transition back to the campus for students on programmes approved for in-person delivery. Our programme leaders incorporated practice was deemed positive by students and made these changes permanent, for example, the use of flipped classroom approaches, with pre-recorded lecture materials shared for asynchronous access via the Virtual Learning Environment prior to in-person classroom activities are more common within many of our programmes.
- 4.3 In 2021/22, we developed the ENhance framework which is designed to support curriculum design and enhancement by providing a shared reference point and common vocabulary, establishing a clear structure to curriculum design and facilitating a more systematic sharing of existing effective practice. There are five main themes for curriculum enhancement: employability, global focus, inclusion, sustainability and research practice integration. It is the expectation that all programmes will demonstrate full engagement with at least three of the themes by 2025, and thus far 21% of our programmes have met this minimum threshold following the first year in 2021/22 that was developed as a pilot approach to this work. All programmes are on track to be successfully reviewed by the end of the strategy period. This approach is embedded into the Quality Framework for the University, with annual programme monitoring and Institution-Led Reviews tracking the key touch points.
- 4.4 Building on the success of the ENhance framework, we have developed our approach to curriculum design and approval through Edinburgh Napier's Approach to Curricula Transformation (ENACT). From 2023/24, the University are inviting programme teams to participate in a scaffolded and supported approach to ensure that our programmes provide an excellent teaching and learning experience for students. This approach taken is multi-service and draws on both academic and professional services in the conception, (re)design and (re)development of academic programmes. Multi-service curriculum development team(s) will be comprised of inviting representation from various professional services to contribute, including the Library, Wellbeing & Inclusion, Academic Skills, Student Futures (employability service), Information Services/Learning Technologists, English for Academic Purposes, International, Transnational Education & Global Online Operations. We also incorporate up-to-date market and employability intelligence, such as Skills Development Scotland, HESA, UCAS, and sector skills data, as part of our curriculum (re)development processes to ensure that our provision is aligned to the needs of our learners and employers.
- 4.5 We actively involve students as agents in this partnership approach, thereby ensuring that student focus, central to the ENhance Framework, is at the centre of curriculum design, development, and enhancement. We are exploring opportunities to support and train students to engage with, and review, curriculum confidently as part of a broader team composed of academics and professional services colleagues, drawing on the expertise and experience of

student programme representatives. This support will be based upon the principles of the University's award-winning 'Students as Colleagues' programme.

4.6 Providing an excellent student experience remains a priority for the University. We scored 78% for the key overall satisfaction question in the 2023 National Student Survey, compared with 80% in 2022 albeit this was a newly developed survey with new questions added and a different scoring system, and thus results are not directly comparable. The average in the Scottish sector was 77% and the benchmark for the University was 74%, which we have exceeded. We retained our top student satisfaction in Edinburgh rank for the third year in a row and are ranked joint 7th out of the 16 higher education institutions in Scotland. To develop improvement plans we analyse student feedback from sector surveys including National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey along with feedback from internal module evaluation surveys to develop Student Experience plans that address the key themes for each academic subject area. These action plans have a strong focus on building student community, improving organisation and management of courses (including placements) and enhancing our approaches to assessment and feedback. The impact of these plans are improvements to student experience focussing on the areas that positively impact student experience and retention.

4.7 Student retention and progression in the University decreased following the pandemic, as it did across the UK higher education sector, and has been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis faced by all students across the country. To improve student retention, with a particular focus on those students in their first or second year in undergraduate study, we created a comprehensive action plan for 2023/24 aligned to supporting student success. Progress against the action plan is reported to the University Executive and Senior Leadership Teams on a regular basis. There are three key pillars to this work:

- **Pillar 1: Student community, engagement, and academic development** with the aim of enhancing our students' sense of belonging to our broad and inclusive learning community and engaging them as partners in their individual learning journey. To improve our understanding of student engagement, we are actively promoting the use of our student check-in system across all subject areas. For students who do not engage, either in-person or virtually, with university systems (active monitoring allows us to identify such individuals), we are ensuring that they are contacted and supported to get back on track with their studies. We have implemented new self-assessments for students in week four of each Trimester so that student engagement and progression can be monitored, and relevant support offered, when useful.
- **Pillar 2: Staff community, engagement, and development** with the aim of enhancing our staff's collective sense of belonging as well as supporting their development and opportunities. This focus on our staff is strengthened through a range of supportive and meaningful networks as well as diverse and timely opportunities for relevant staff CPD and development. We are implementing an enhanced academic staff induction that feeds into new campus in-person peer learning networks which will raise staff engagement in best practice for student retention and ensure that we have a consistent and high-quality approach in supporting student success.

Personal Development Tutors (PDT) have an essential role in building and enhancing relationships between staff and students, and in fostering a supportive, connected community. They are the first point of contact for students for academic and pastoral issues, and signpost to key student support services. Training and guidance continue to be provided to all PDTs via the [PDT Toolkit](#), via an online course, and via synchronous training delivered online in partnership with our Student Wellbeing & Inclusion team. Since 2022/23, training sessions have been integrated into the timetable of professional development opportunities offered by the Department of Learning & Teaching Enhancement (DLTE) to all staff delivering and supporting learning & teaching ('Learning & Teaching ENssentials'). Sessions are recorded and made available online for asynchronous viewing. We have created a forum to support PDTs and supplement training, with on-campus and virtual forums, for academic staff to meet and talk to members of staff from the Student Wellbeing & Inclusion team.

Over the course of this academic year, our focus will be on ensuring that all students have access to, and engagement with, their PDTs and, to facilitate this, students will have centrally timetabled scheduled meetings with their allocated tutor. It is hoped that this early engagement in the trimester will have a positive impact on student success. Additional student engagement work such as providing academic skills sessions for direct entrants, promotion of student check-in, and programme-level student events in the welcome week have been positively received by students already in the trimester. This engagement will identify any potential issues that can be resolved, and early interventions can be taken to ensure student success.

- **Pillar 3: Creating effective and purposeful curriculum design with a focus on assessment and feedback** to ensure our programmes and modules are relevant and purposeful. For every academic subject area, we are introducing, in collaboration with the Edinburgh Napier Students Association (ENSA), School-level roles for students to enhance the learning and teaching experience for all students. School Learning & Teaching student consultants will work with School Heads of Learning & Teaching on projects to enhance the student learning experience, ensuring that the student voice is at the heart of School-level decision-making. The collaborative nature of the initiative is also intended to strengthen channels of communication across programmes, Schools and with ENSA, leading to more effective actions being taken in response to common issues raised by students.

5. Coherent learning provisions

- 5.1 The University is dedicated to preparing our graduates, a substantial number of whom will continue to live and work in the broader Edinburgh region, with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the demands and needs of prospective employers. Our programme provision is directly aligned to the economic, social, and cultural needs of the regional and national skills agendas. We work closely to support employer and industry engagement in every programme and both the University Strategy and Employability Strategy place a strong emphasis on 'building networks, to build the range of career opportunities for our graduates'. Our connections with business sectors in the City of Edinburgh and Lothians, as well as wider Scotland, are particularly strong, and the growing number of our Industry Advisory Boards in each of our Schools help to ensure the employer skills needs are met through curriculum development, student placement and other work-related learning opportunities. Examples of our Industry Boards are BioSciences, Media and Business which all have representatives from external members from local, national, and international companies. The Boards can also enable the start of discussions on work-related learning or placement opportunities for students, guest lecturing, or research/innovation opportunity.
- 5.2 We are in the process of completing a strategic review of the size and shape of the University that will set the direction of travel for the next ten years in terms of our academic provision and will inform the development of our campuses. This review was undertaken in consultation with a wide range of colleagues within the University, including workshops with student participation, and was also informed by a strategic review of the external context and environment. As part of this, we are committed to building academic excellence in two key themes, wellbeing, and sustainability, which includes specialisms in health, environment, culture and communities, AI and emerging technologies. In developing new curriculum, we complete market intelligence and employability skills alignment research as part of our curriculum (re)development processes to ensure that our provision is aligned to the needs of our learners and employers. We recently completed a review of our taught postgraduate provision and with fresh insights into developing a forward-facing curriculum. Examples of new courses under development include the areas of data analytics, design, digital business, creative technologies, and clinical health technologies, as well as proposals for new online offerings. These changes should positively impact our student recruitment in future years with courses planned to open for recruitment in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

6. Work-based learning and skills

- 6.1 Edinburgh Napier University has a strong tradition of providing work-based learning and work-related learning opportunities for our students, and we continue to build on our success. We have grown our provision of Graduate Level Apprenticeships to c.430FTE (2023/24) in the subjects of computing, business, and engineering. In 2023/24, we have recruited 151FTE new Graduate Apprenticeships with the introduction of an additional framework; MSc Cyber Security; a new pathway; BA Business Management for Tourism and Hospitality. We plan for an additional route in 2024/25 in accountancy and financial services which will be developed with employers and over the next few years, we anticipate our graduate apprenticeship intake to be over 200FTE students. We are keen to open more pathways, for example, in healthcare when there is opportunity to do so.
- 6.2 To support the delivery of skills development, we continue to grow our delivery of open/bespoke CPD and alongside our delivery of upskilling courses, we ensure support for local, national, regional, and international organisations to develop their workforce. We have prioritised individual learners using our SFC Upskilling funding, introducing 8 new courses in 2022/23, running a total of 22 courses, reaching 503 individual learners. From 2023/24 onwards, we are planning to increase our provision related to sustainability and net zero, while continuing to respond to changes in learner skills needs.
- 6.3 Our recently established Innovation Hub and Research Centres provide an effective conduit for commercial CPD activity. We have co-created a bespoke MSc Digital and Business Risk Management programme with Deloitte which will be offered to all their graduates. We are also delivering fifteen courses on the Ministry of Defence's University Short Course Programme (USCP) over the next four years.
- 6.4 The University Employability Strategy was approved in October 2022, and in 2023/24, we are implementing key elements that ensure that our graduates leave Edinburgh Napier fully equipped to build successful careers and capitalise on opportunities. In the most recent Graduate Outcomes survey, 79% of our undergraduate students were in professional or managerial positions. The strategy has four strands:
- Enhancing employability culture across the institution.
 - Embedding employability in all programmes to enhance student professional development.
 - Developing experience by increasing student access to work-based and work-related learning within and outside of the curriculum. This will include internships, long-term work placements, volunteering, and entrepreneurial development practice.
 - Ensuring legacy by providing our graduates with professional development opportunities through employability interactions for up to 24 months after graduation.
- 6.5 A key priority for 2023/24 is the introduction of a new approach that enables focussed support and career planning for all students at an early stage in their studies at Edinburgh Napier. Our embedded approach to employability, a guiding principle, ensures that the student experience is enhanced by our curriculum, underpinned by professional practice and excellent research, resulting in positive outcomes for graduates who will be confident and empowered to steer their own future. We will ensure that all undergraduate students are 'career ready' by offering work-related learning opportunities which develops their skills, and these range from short to long-term work placements, live projects, research, internships, volunteering, and entrepreneurial development practice.
- 6.6 Development of start-ups, enterprise skills, and capacity building for knowledge exchange has been a key focus at Edinburgh Napier, delivered through Bright Red Triangle (BRT), our hub for enterprise practice, development, and support. BRT engages with a community of over 850 registered members and has supported over 700 start-ups since 2005. In 2022/23, we engaged with c.250 students. We delivered enterprise skills development and training for aspiring entrepreneurs at all stages of the entrepreneurial journey and offer our services to all alumni without time limit as well as to staff, students, and our partners in the local community.

We continue to develop our business incubation facilities, training, mentoring and support, offering to inspire entrepreneurs and increase the number of start-ups, and social enterprises. Core offerings include entrepreneurship training programmes, social shifters platform supporting mission-driven masterclasses, and support for Women's Enterprise Scotland.

7. Net zero and environmental sustainability

- 7.1 The Edinburgh Napier Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) was launched in December 2021. It supports opportunities for our entire University community to work together, further developing a culture of change, and providing a structured platform for individuals, teams, and wider community-led groups to own and take responsibility of key actions that will enable us to meet our commitments.
- 7.2 Our total emissions for 2022/23 were 4,671tCO₂e for scope 1, 2 and 3 combined, and we expect these to reduce to 4,367tCO₂e for 2023/24. To achieve our commitment to net zero in our operations by 2030, the strategy will guide action and focus on the enabling objectives which includes 38 actions for development and implementation throughout the 2021/22 to 2023/24 academic years. Details of all commitments including an overview of actions are publicly available at www.napier.ac.uk/environment. Edinburgh Napier University was named the top university in Scotland for sustainability and ethics for the second consecutive year, ranked by People & Planet University League.
- 7.3 Our strategic priorities are:
- Take progressive action to achieve net zero in our operations by 2030 at the latest, seek to minimise both our wider and legacy carbon footprint, and influence sustainable practices within and beyond our campuses.
- 7.4 Combine the expertise and motivation of our community to enhance environmental sustainability within, and beyond, the University through our curriculum, research, operations, partnerships, and engagement.
- Demonstrate delivery against Scotland's National Performance Framework and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We signed the Sustainable Development Goals Accord during the 2022/23 academic year.
- 7.5 Specifically within the 2023/24 academic year, the University will achieve the following goals aligned towards compliance with the Scottish Government public sector carbon reporting and reduction guidance, Public Sector Leadership on the Global Climate Emergency:
- Develop an updated Energy Plan drawing on building condition and low/net zero heat audits carried out last year. The plan will include immediate and long-term opportunities throughout the entire University estate utilising Salix, internal and external funding, as well as exploring opportunities for collaboration, such as through the Edinburgh Climate Compact.
 - An institutional wide energy campaign was launched in September during the Scottish Government Climate Week. The campaign will develop through the full 2023/24 academic year prioritising actions the University community can lead and achieve on campus, and at home, focussed on changing behaviours that reduce carbon emissions.
 - We will publish an offset plan in alignment with Scottish Government guidance on nature-based carbon reductions. Building on world leading academic and professional expertise held within the Edinburgh Napier community, the University will further review and pursue ethical opportunities. The offset plan will be inextricably linked to the Energy Plan, with a clear prioritisation of carbon mitigation opportunities.
 - The existing business travel policy, travel plan (covering the day-to-day commute), and parking policy will be updated and published. Parking charges will be reintroduced with a percentage allocation supporting projects focused on active travel and public transport.
 - The University's Business School published the inaugural Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) report within the 2022/23 academic year. Building on the report, including investigative work into UNSDG impact throughout academic and research publications, and completion of the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS), the University will further develop UNSDG awareness, utilising wider resources available.

8. High-quality research and innovation

- 8.1 The broad and long-standing aim of our Research & Innovation strategy is to foster a sustainable and interdisciplinary research environment that inspires and brings together our academic staff, researchers, students, and external stakeholders, to solve real world problems, as well as influence professional practice and policy nationally and internationally, driving key societal, economic, and environmental impacts.
- 8.2 The scores from the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 assessment indicated that 68% of our research activity was assessed as “internationally excellent” and “world leading”, and Edinburgh Napier was the top ranking Scottish modern institution for research power and impact. Our growth in research has been marked, we submitted 251 staff to the most recent REF, significantly up from 99 in 2014, and our Research Power increased from 250 to 718, mirroring growth in volume and quality of research undertaken. We submitted research in 13 units of assessment (UoAs), and we improved in each one that we had previously submitted to, we also entered four new Units of Assessment.

Effective use of SFC core research grants, supporting sustainability and future research excellence

- 8.3 As a result of our improved REF results, our Research Excellence Grant (REG) funding has increased to £3.3M in 2023/24. Funding has been ring-fenced for research competitive awards, supporting newly formed research centres, supporting two-stage commercialisation process and various Innovation Hub Knowledge Exchange activities. A monthly Research Funding Forum has been established to support large scale interdisciplinary research applications with a focus on larger strategic funding opportunities, often in collaboration with external partnerships involving academics, business and third sector organisations. Our REG/University Innovation Fund (UIF) / Research Postgraduate Grant (RPG) funding is also being used to support PhD studentships, training and development opportunities for research students, and enhancements to our postgraduate research student monitoring systems.
- 8.4 Our REG/RPG/UIF funding is distributed through a transparent model to our Schools and the Research Innovation & Enterprise (RIE) department to support strategic initiatives developed as part of our research strategy. The allocation within the University follows the same methodology as the SFC to calculate these grants. In 2023/24, we aim to grow our income from externally funded research by 15%, and these funds will be used to support strategic initiatives to seed fund preliminary projects leading to an increase in external funding applications and successful projects at Edinburgh Napier. Other uses of this funding will be to support staff development and networking opportunities, investment in research infrastructure, and embedding our interdisciplinary research themes across the University. Through investment in academic appointments and RIE, where we are building a critical mass of expertise in key areas, we grow our research income and increased capacity to do so; in particular, the growth of large-scale interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange projects.
- 8.5 Research and Innovation from SFC funding will support one of the University’s key priorities which is the creation of a Doctoral College. The Doctoral College will bring together all activities supporting our Postgraduate Research students into a single structure which will enhance the student experience and raise the visibility of our research degree community. The proposal is driven by four core factors for our research students: a desire to establish greater and more consistent visibility; a desire to achieve greater efficiency; a desire to achieve greater consistency of good practice; and a desire to establish a greater sense of community for research students. The Doctoral College will bring additional staff resource to support our postgraduate research (PGR) community and will work closely with all five academic schools to grow our PGR student numbers, address issues raised in the recent Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, and further integrate our PGR students into our wider research community.

- 8.6 Our Research & Innovation strategy places knowledge exchange activities and plans at the heart of enabling impact, and creating an environment and culture that has external engagement at its core. Priorities for 2023/24 will align closely to Scottish Government priorities including the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), The Innovation Strategy for Scotland, and further developing entrepreneurial culture. We will continue to work collaboratively across the innovation ecosystem to contribute to larger, mission, and challenge led interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange programmes in areas of strength, and build partnership in key clusters across Scotland, the UK, and internationally.
- 8.7 We continue to use our RPG funding to support student development through our university wide researcher development programme, and plan to launch student peer mentoring in 2023/24 to complement conference attendance and external networking opportunities supported by RPG funding.

9. Enabling an excellent research environment and positive cultures

- 9.1 Aligned to our academic themes of wellbeing and sustainability, we have six new research centres: Cardiovascular Health, Mental Health Practice; Policy and Law Research; Military Research, Education & Public Engagement; Child & Family Law and Policy; Transport Research Innovation; and Tourism Research. The research centres will strengthen the university's visibility around research areas, both within the UK and internationally, and we are exploring opportunities for joint supervision, staff exchanges, and joint research bids with organisations in a wide range of sectors, as well as academic partners across the UK.
- 9.2 Teams in the RIE Directorate continue to support the diversification of our funding streams, working with academics on applications for research and knowledge exchange to a broad range of funders. We are working with key research centre leads to develop bespoke external engagement plans with clear propositions for business and are continuing our knowledge transfer project (KTP) capacity building programme, initiated in 2022/23, to build a pipeline of KTP opportunities. Our Consultancy and Commercial activity framework are being re-launched to incentivise staff to undertake consultancy and non-credit bearing bespoke CPD courses in support of knowledge exchange and external collaboration. We will conduct a review of the effectiveness of the Framework in delivering increased activity in 2023/24.
- 9.3 We are continuing to improve our external visibility by developing the next iteration of the Innovation Hub website to showcase the University's research capabilities, case studies with external partners, facilities, and research and innovation news and events. We launched our Early Career Academic Development programme last year and now have 30 newly recruited academic staff participating. The development programme is designed to help new academics to successfully develop their research portfolio while also developing their teaching skills and experience.
- 9.4 We created a university wide academic and research mentoring scheme for roll out during the 2023/24 academic year which is designed to provide personalised support to our staff. With over 70 people now registered, mentoring pairs will work over the year to develop the mentee towards their academic pathway. We are scoping the potential to widen the scheme to Professional services staff including research-enabling staff later in the year.

Research concordats

- 9.5 The University's annual statement on research integrity was discussed at our September Research and Innovation Committee meeting and is available from [Research Integrity \(napier.ac.uk\)](https://www.napier.ac.uk/research-integrity). The Committee plans to focus on exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in relation to cases of research misconduct alongside a review of support for digital data collection, as well as developing our audit and review processes of ethical applications.
- 9.6 We have a long-standing commitment to implementing the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and we are currently the only Scottish university which has retained its HR Excellence in Research Award at the 12-year external review point. We have identified job security and career progression as key priorities of our current three-year Researcher Development [Concordat Action plan](#) to enhance the experience of our contract research staff, and over the coming years, we want to make a step-change in these areas.
- 9.7 The University voluntarily signed up to the eight Principles of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat and following a self-assessment and gap analysis, we have identified priority workstreams aligned to the concordat principles. Currently, we have prioritised activity in three areas: engagement and KE partnerships; KE training and development; and KE policies, processes, and governance. In 2023/24, we will recruit a new Knowledge Exchange and Impact Officer to co-ordinate the continuous improvement activities across the university.

- 9.8 We continue to build on our collaboration with Queen Margaret University (QMU) to provide joint professional and career development events and support to our researchers across both universities. We have recently offered several joint workshops on career planning, research leadership, and applying for fellowships, and will expand the topic range during 2023/24, as well as run workshops to bring our jointly supervised students and their supervisory teams from both universities together.
- 9.9 To enrich our academic and research culture, we are introducing a sabbatical scheme that will allow academics to apply for a period of leave to work to enhance the scope, range and quality of our research, as well as giving individual colleagues the opportunity for personal and professional development. The sabbatical policy will be launched during 2023/24 and will be available to academic roles at Grade 6 and above who have a minimum of two years' service.
- 9.10 We are working to support our research-enabling staff based within our RIE Directorate and in School Support Services, through the development of a work-shadowing scheme, as well as creating opportunities to engage with the Researcher Development programme for all staff regardless of role.

10.1 At Edinburgh Napier, we are committed to creating an academic culture that has external engagement and knowledge exchange at its heart. As previously stated, priorities for 2023/24 will align closely to Scottish Government priorities including the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), the Innovation Strategy for Scotland, and further developing entrepreneurial culture. We will build on significant improvement in research quality and impact evidenced in REF2021 results and exploit applied research and collaborative R&D opportunities to deliver positive impacts and improve Scotland's economy. We are actively developing the research culture and growing the capacity for innovation and knowledge exchange. In 2023/24, we will strengthen the support infrastructure with six new posts being created in the central Research, Innovation & Enterprise office. We will continue to work collaboratively across Scottish higher education institutions, engaging in collaborative workstreams to share resources and best practice across the community of KE/KT professionals. We will work with the SFC to support the further development and implementation of plans in relation to the University KEIF and becoming strategically closer to SFC infrastructure investments such as Innovation Centres and Interface. Edinburgh Napier will utilise and match fund the Platform Grant towards delivery of the seven UIF Outcomes.

The following sections summarise the planned programme of activities aligned to Scottish Government priorities for 2023/24:

10.1.1 Outcome one (demand stimulation): Increase the demand for services and quality of external engagement.

Innovation Hub and Targeted Business Engagement Activity around the Key Areas of Strength

The Innovation Hub provides a one-stop-shop for business to engage with our services. For 2023/24, we are developing a programme of demand stimulation activities aligned to Scottish Priorities contained in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the Innovation Strategy for Scotland. Specific examples include:

- **Develop an International Network in Wood Science and Technology** with focus on engagement with industry and public in innovation and international standards, early career researcher training, and path to net zero. In 2023/24, we plan to convene leaders from industry, government, and education to create a shared mission for sustainable built environment by utilising the renewable natural capital of timber to drive timber innovation and contribute towards net-zero targets.
- **Focus on CPD and Workforce Upskilling:** Alignment to the Future Skills Action Plan with new programmes being developed in: Digital Tech including AI, Cybersecurity and Data Use, and Business Analytics; Energy Transitions (upskilling in three of the most relevant renewable energy technologies: solar PV, wind turbines, and battery energy storage); and Construction (Timber Engineering course offering in partnership with New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering (NMITE), and in other sectors such as Life Sciences and Retail.
- **Building on the MSc in Digital and Business Risk Management model** planning a programme of engagement targeting large businesses in financial services to develop new Masters level CPD.
- **Showcasing more University expertise** to stimulate demand for our services, routing enquiries efficiently and driving business engagement activity. In 2023/24, we will create 15 new case studies demonstrating how Edinburgh Napier research is impacting and helping companies and other partner organisations to innovate, solve problems, and create social and economic impacts.
- **Extending the Partnering with NHS Assure to deliver the NHS Scotland Assure Research Service** to manage a £1.55m research fund focused on stimulating research

and innovation activity aimed at improving infection control within the built environment in hospitals in Scotland.

10.1.2 Outcome two (simplification/commercialisation): Demonstrably simplified business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish Universities.

In 2023/24, we will focus on developing the infrastructure, policies and processes, and a programme of IP commercialisation activity aligned to Scottish Priority clusters and thematic areas. Examples of new planned activity for 2023/24 include:

- **Commercialisation IP to create Hearing Aids of the Future:** IP arising from the multi-million pound EPSRC-funded COG-MHEAR programme which aims to deliver cognitively inspired 5G-IoT enabled, multi-modal Hearing Aids. Planning visits and engagement with national and international industry and clinical collaborators (including Sonova, The VR Hive) to develop KTP/Innovate UK/UKRI proposals and progressing plans for an ENU spinout.
- **Driving Commercialisation of New Technologies for Energy Transitions** aligning to the Infrastructure Investment Plan including further testing of a new Millimeter Scaled Power Storage Devices, 3D shaped energy storage device, and validation of a Textile Wearable Battery.
- **Engaging with investors to drive investment in our spinouts** working in partnership across academic Schools, senior leadership, Finance, and external partners, and licensing deals (17 live projects in the pipeline) with focused support in areas of ENU strength aligned to Scottish priorities e.g. cyber accelerator programme.

10.1.3 Outcome three (simplification/greater innovation): Working partnership with the Enterprise Agencies, Innovation Centres, and Interface to promote greater innovation, economic recovery, and green growth.

- The University plays an active role within the innovation ecosystem in Scotland. We will continue to engage with key partners and stakeholders such as Innovation Centres and Interface. The University will continue to host BE-ST and The East of Scotland KTP Centre. We are engaging with Chambers of Commerce and other Civic partners to target more place-based funding opportunities such as City Deals and working with Scottish Enterprise and South of Scotland Enterprise on specific opportunities. Some examples of planned activities include:
- **Focus on KTP:** Building on the capacity building and training completed last year, we are delivering a focused communications programme on KTP in 2023/24 using video case studies to showcase how ENU has delivered significant social and economic impacts through greater innovation and green growth. Examples include:
 - [CSY Architects](#) harmonising systems and improving efficiencies within the company by utilising ENU's building information modelling (BIM) expertise.
 - [Stoane Lighting](#) lowering in products through-life carbon and ensuring sustainability considerations are embedded into product design by using ENU-developed methodology and benchmarks for the whole life carbon assessment of a range of lighting products.
 - [Verint](#) improving efficiencies and customer experience by using ENU's computing and AI expertise to enhance the software product used by call handlers in large call centres.
 - [Multiple Marketing](#) this Edinburgh-based creative marketing agency worked with Edinburgh Napier University data scientists and statisticians to develop a unique consumer insight tool to drive both their expansion and increased reputation as industry experts in planning and insight.
- **Improving Strategic External Engagement and Multidisciplinary Collaboration:** ENU created six new Research Centres in 2022/23 to total 13, and, during 2023/24, we will identify key synergies and develop collaborative multidisciplinary programmes with academic partners, industry, and other partner institutions. We are building key

partnerships across the innovation ecosystem which align well with our areas of expertise:

- FinTech Scotland: we will deliver a Crypto FinTech Seminar as part of Scotland's FinTech Festival 2023 showcasing our expertise and the use of cryptography, blockchain, zero trust, and quantum computers.
- Turing Institute successfully applied to be part of the prestigious Turing University Network of academic institutions demonstrating sustainable excellence and critical mass of expertise in AI/Data Science, as well as excellence in translational research and impact (a programme of engagement is planned for 2023/24).
- Energy Technology Partnership: we are now working together with North Sea Transition Authority to deliver a showcase on renewables and energy storage.
- South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE): continuing the development and build of the Mountain Bike Innovation Centre in Innerleithen and supporting opportunities for startups and inward investment into the region.
- Scottish Football Association: creating a Scottish Football Innovation Hub which will initially focus on the development of resources and support for evaluating community wealth building-related projects aligned to the Scottish Government strategic priorities and the Scottish FA Strategy (involves engagement with business leaders, academics, UEFA, and key stakeholders will shape and co-create these projects).
- Police Scotland, Scottish Police Authority, and HMICS: staff are working with partners in the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) in a range of areas including policing practice and governance, supporting community coherence, and use of digital technologies, and have developed a programme of Knowledge Exchange workshops, sandpit events, research calls and training events for 2023/24.

10.1.4 Outcome four (entrepreneurialism): Scottish HEIs as a sector will have made a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses.

Development of Start-ups, Enterprise Skills, and Capacity Building for KE has been a key focus at Edinburgh Napier University and the main driver for this is Bright Red Triangle (BRT). Details of the activities in this space are summarised in section 6 of this Outcome Agreement. Key development for 2023/24 will include:

- **Women's Enterprise Scotland Sales and Negotiation Programme 2023.** Develop and deliver workshops for Sales/Business development and mentoring for all participants (15 participants overall).
- **Greater Focus on Social Enterprise:** Building on the Social Innovation Challenge, BRT deliver annually as part of the MyDevelopment Programme (compulsory for undergraduates in the Business School over the past 5 years), we will raise the profile amongst a broader range of staff and students, not only about social enterprise as a pathway for impact but also increasing awareness of the UN's SDGs to help frame real world challenges and opportunities.

10.1.5 Outcome five (international): In partnership with Scottish Development International, Connected Scotland to promote and engage Scotland internationally (operating under Scotland's International Framework).

The university will continue to work closely with key international funders such as the British Council, UKRO, Scotland Europa, and others to align University capabilities and strength, and to maximise R&KE funding and inward investment into Scotland. Examples of planned activity for 2023/24 are:

- Working closely with UKRO, Scotland Europa, academic leads, and external partners to rebuild networks and proactively target Horizon Europe funding following UK association to the funding programme for 2024 calls onwards.
- Expand work with British Council to provide training for Tourism & Hospitality sectors across various countries including India and Mexico.
- Start For Future: ENU is a founding member of the Start For Future (SFF) network which works in collaboration with over 25 European University partners on a start-up programme, sharing entrepreneurial training, coaching, access to industry and investor networks, incubator resources, and best practice. SFF is focused on start-ups in the following key areas: Urban Mobility, Low Carbon Manufacturing, Health, Food, Energy, and Circular Economy. These programmes rely on the supporting ecosystems and networks. This year, we are focused on developing our Deep Tech network. Since the end of 2021, SFF has trained over 200 academic and non-academic staff, mentored more than 3,000 students, and supported the creation of over 150 start-ups.

10.1.6 Outcome six (inclusive growth and social impact): Building on current and good practice Scottish HEIs will have scaled up their support of the Scottish Government's ambitions for inclusive growth.

We will continue to deliver Housing Construction and Infrastructure (HCI) Skills Gateway (part of the Edinburgh City Region Deal) to offer clear, integrated, and inclusive progression routes into construction careers providing training and support for people from disadvantaged areas into education and employment with key skills (from school level through to advanced postgraduate training). In support of the Scottish Funding Council's upskilling agenda, the University provided a range of short courses and will continue to evolve the offerings aligned to the Regional and Sectoral Approach to Skills Development and Increased Job Outcomes. In 2023/24, we will allocate strategic internal funding to develop a suite of new Open CPD courses that respond to market demand and align with the government objectives of shorter, sharper courses to support learning throughout life and to offer more flexibility to suit learners with different situations, and at all stages in life.

In 2023/24, we will work with the Broomhouse Community Project to provide access to facilities and expertise to support a programme of third sector projects. The community-based programme with links to our wider widening participation work will identify priorities and we are looking to align student projects and academic time to support these.

10.1.7 Outcome seven (equality and diversity): Building on current and good practice, HEIs will have ensured positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff, and all who are affected by the UIF.

The University will commit to supporting the delivery of Outcome 7 at a sector level through the UIF collaborative activity and sharing best practice. Examples of activity and actions include implementing an agreed set of broad principles aimed at improving transparency and equal opportunities across Research & Innovation activities: monitoring and improving representation and participation in relation to allocations of internal R&KE funding within ENU (including REG/UIF/RPG funds). In cases where a competition-based logic is employed to allocate internal funding, an open and robust process will include a clear set of criteria on which decisions will be made; communication on how the decision-making process is organised.

10.2 Strategic Projects Supported with UIF Uplift Funding

We will utilise UIF uplift funding to accelerate the recruitment of three new posts in Research Innovation and Enterprise as well as fund a number of Strategic programmes which align to Scottish Government priorities and delivery of the UIF Outcomes.

To increase our focus on challenge and mission-led funding opportunities, we will recruit a new Head of Research Funding with a track record in securing large, complex, interdisciplinary bids; a KE and Impact Officer will support a range of KE continuous improvement initiatives including the KE Concordat action plan implementation; to increase the amount of time for externally focused, proactive business development, we will increase capacity in our External Projects team to support pre-award activities. The overall aim is to increase the number of academic staff actively engaged and supported to engage in externally funded R&KE activity and to increase the scale of proposals ENU are involved with as lead applicant or partner.

In addition, several strategic initiatives will be launched in 2023/24 including:

- A Playbook for Entrepreneurship Education to Support the Implementation of the Entrepreneurial Campus in Tertiary Education: We will create a playbook to train educators on entrepreneurship and enterprise education, aligning with Scottish Government priorities and drawing on best practices from across ENU and the Tertiary education sector.
- Launch of Women's Enterprise Centre in collaboration with Women's Enterprise Scotland, offering bespoke support for women across university and in connected local communities. Will evolve into a SDG5 Hub allowing ENU thought leadership in gender equality.
- Focus on Social Innovation working with Sealey Associates and CEIS to deliver a series of workshops to optimise success at individual and institutional level related to social innovation, opportunities to adapt and tailor existing resources and capabilities, and focussing on diversity and inclusion. The aim is to build capability amongst knowledge exchange professionals and schools with a view to developing ENU's social enterprise pipeline.

APPENDIX A: ALIGNMENT OF EDINBURGH NAPIER PRIORITIES 2023/24 TO SFC STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Edinburgh Napier Priorities for 2023-4	Alignment to SFC priority strategic plan areas		
	Enabling people to learn and flourish	Generating new ideas and diffusing knowledge	Building a responsive, coherent, sustainable system
Improve student experience and student success with a focus on improving student engagement, support for academic staff and ensure that no student group is disadvantaged with support for widening access embedded into the services we provide.	•	•	•
Ensure sustainable student recruitment for the University for Scottish, RUK, and international students. For Scottish domiciled students, we will achieve our student number targets set by the Scottish Funding Council with a particular focus on increasing our intake of direct entrants from college and TPG students.	•		•
Improve our infrastructure and estates to facilitate the future growth of the University and improve student and staff experience.	•	•	•
We will enhance our curriculum to deliver on our mission to provide high quality teaching & learning through the development of new postgraduate taught programmes.	•	•	•
Establish an Embedded Pathway College to support international student entry into our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.	•		•
Develop an overall Student Accommodation Strategy, working with other Universities in the region to align plans and provision of accommodation for students.			•
Enhance our research environment to increase the impact of our academic work with the creation of a doctoral college and further development of the innovation hub.		•	•
Ensure we have the best academic and professional services staff with focus on workforce and succession planning.	•	•	•
Enhance our staff experience through targeted improvements in collaborative working, address under-performance, and staff wellbeing.		•	•
Improve strategic external engagement locally, nationally, and internationally.	•	•	•

Outcome Agreement between Edinburgh Napier University and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2023-24

On behalf of Edinburgh Napier University:

Signed: 

Print name: Andrea Nolan

Position: Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Date: 10/11/23

Signed: 

Print name: June Boyle

Position: Chair

Date: 09/11/23

On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed: 

Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 15 January 2024