



Annex

SFC survey on University Innovation Fund approach

The SFC is reviewing the new University Innovation Fund (UIF) approach and funding model over 2019-2020. A UIF Review Group has been established by SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) to assist with this and is seeking initial information on how the new UIF approach is viewed within institutions and how the planning, management and measurement are undertaken to help deliver against the UIF outcomes. This will complement the existing evidence available to the UIF Review Group which includes SFC outcome agreement information.

Responses should be concise (up to 250 words per question), containing key points, tangibles and evidence where possible. Where challenges are identified, institutions are encouraged to suggest methods/mechanisms for overcoming these in the future. The case study should be no more than 500 words in length.

A single institutional submission is requested.

Response form

Institution: Edinburgh Napier University

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Purpose
Please describe what your institution considers UIF to be for and how widely this is understood.
Edinburgh Napier University considers the UIF to be an instrumental funding mechanism used to leverage collaborative relationships relating to the exploitation of research, enterprise, commercialisation and innovation activities, by which to achieve the government's economic and societal priorities.
Please describe how your institution ensures UIF is targeted at delivering the published UIF outcomes.
A proportion of the UIF allocation is utilised at Edinburgh Napier to fund core staff members employed within the Business Engagement Team as well as local School Research and Innovation Officers. Their remit spans a wide-range of essential KE and innovation activity, with a particular focus of their agreed job description centred on the implementation and delivery of activities in support of the UIF priority outcome commitments as outlined in the University's annual Outcome Agreement.

Further, a proportion of the UIF is earmarked specifically for central and local Public Engagement activity, including engaging in the Edinburgh Beltane collaborative partnership framework. A proportion is also earmarked for researcher development training, specifically tailored to business engagement.

School Directors of Research, with responsibility for local UIF spend, are familiar with the University's UIF commitments against the published outcomes and are responsible for approving UIF spend requests based on intended delivery aligned to one of the seven outcomes.

Management and Planning

Please describe how your institution plans its UIF allocation and how well plans are understood across the institution. Are there any challenges to effective planning with the way UIF is allocated by the SFC?

The University's Research and Innovation Office is responsible for calculating the allocation of UIF distributed across the six Schools, utilising a formula that mirrors the SFC allocation model in determining the share of outcome grant assigned to each School (following a top-slice of central costs). The University Leadership Team approves the proposed allocations before being communicated locally to School Directors of Research.

The research grant allocation breakout typically occurs annually in April / May, following receipt of the indicative research grant allocations from SFC, which allows for consideration of UIF allocations by the University Leadership Team and the University's Research and Innovation Committee at their final meeting of the academic year.

Please describe how your annual UIF allocation is managed within overall budgets in order to support delivery of your UIF plans.

The UIF allocation is considered alongside the allocation of REG and RPG on an annual basis on receipt of the indicative grant from SFC. The Research and Innovation Office is responsible for ensuring that central costs relating to our UIF commitments are accounted for, before calculating the local allocations for each School. School Directors of Research are provided with a summary of the research grant breakouts, along with information on spend restrictions informed by the published principles. This includes details of the University's UIF outcome priorities for the year.

School Directors of Research are required to report annually at the end of each financial year to the Research and Innovation Committee, with a summary report on spend and outcomes.

Collaboration

How does the new UIF collaborative framework (in addition to your Platform and Outcome Grant) help deliver your institution's KE strategy?

The University recognises that success in securing funding such as ISCF (a major component of the University's KE growth strategy), requires a more concerted and collaborative approach, and welcomes the opportunities brought about by the UIF collaborative framework. This is of particular importance with regard to demand stimulation, working with a range of enterprise agencies; other HEIs and business networks to increase the demand and quality of engagement from business. The University has utilised the additional UIF funding to appoint a 9 month fixed term Knowledge Exchange Manager (Industrial Strategy) specifically to grow the University's ISCF activity, by generating new business relationships and the ongoing fostering and cultivation of existing business relationships between key external business clients and stakeholders and the University. The findings of the UIF SME working groups will also be of significant value to the University in implementing actions to deliver against the KE strategy.

Please identify any barriers or areas for improvement in the new collaborative approach, suggesting methods/mechanisms for overcoming these where possible.

The work undertaken by the SFC University Innovation Fund Collaboration Manager over the last two years has been invaluable in supporting and fostering opportunities for each of the Scottish Universities to collaborate on the seven key UIF priorities, which otherwise might not have happened. This central support is an essential part of the collaboration process and should continue to be funded. One fundamental problem which exists though, is the sheer number of UIF collaboration activity groups which has been set up, each one requiring requiring attendance by the University. The seven key UIF priorities were split up into twelve separate activity sub groups, with each group meeting regularly and there is a real danger that this volume represents too many collaborations and we lose focus. Attendance of key University staff at each of these groups can be a real challenge for the University.

Case study

The UIF Review Group would welcome at least one case study to help the group understand an outcome or impact which UIF has helped to support.

Fully funded from UIF budget, Georgina Jamieson joined Edinburgh Napier University on 25th February 2019 as Knowledge Exchange Manager on a fixed term 9 month post, with a specific focus on ISCF. Over the past 3.5 months she has focused mainly on the following activities:

- **Mapping Institutional Expertise:** By researching current research areas (through Worktribe, the University research management system) and through meeting with School's Directors of Research, she has identified key institutional strengths mapped onto the ISCF Challenges. She has identified three key areas for which Edinburgh Napier will be a lead Scottish institution in developing applications and submitted these to the UIF ISCF Peer Network, of which she is an active member. These three

areas include: Transforming Construction, Digital Security by Design and Healthy Ageing.

- **Creating an Enabling Environment (within Edinburgh Napier):** Georgina has invested substantial time in creating increased awareness of the ISCF and associated opportunities internally. Across drop-in clinics she has organised, as well as one-to-one meetings, she has met more than 30 academics who have an interest and/or research relevant to the ISCF. A workshop will be held at Edinburgh Napier's research conference which will aim to promote interdisciplinary collaborations. UIF funding has also allowed her to launch and manage an ISCF Partnership Development Fund which covers costs for academics to engage with industry partners. There have been 3 applications to this thus far. Georgina also uses blogs, the intranet and twitter to share relevant news and updates about ISCF on a weekly basis. Two applications were submitted to the Transforming Network Plus Call and these were supported by Georgina.
- **Developing External Relationships:** It is a priority for Georgina to engage with key stakeholders across government bodies, industry and other academic universities to raise the reputation of Edinburgh Napier. She has met with 5 KTN Sector Leads and shared our institutional expertise with them. She has attended 10 events focusing on ISCF to ensure she has accurate information on the upcoming challenges. She was invited to attend 2 pre-call scoping workshops for upcoming Wave 3 Challenges including for the Digital Security by Design and Smart Manufacturing Challenges. Other organisations engaged include Innovation Centres, SCDI, CeeD, ESRC and UKRI as well as other Universities including Heriot-Watt University, University of Edinburgh, Dundee, and University of Aberdeen. Through these connections, she has introduced academics to new organisations including Ryder Architects, iXBlue, Siemens Mobility, Enterprise Car Club and ITSolutions who have met with them to discuss potential collaborations.

With a strong understanding and knowledge of institutional research strengths and with priority areas identified, Georgina has started to work with academics on applications for submission to the Transforming Construction (call opens in August 2019), Digital Security by Design (call opens in summer 2020) and Healthy Ageing Challenges (call open TBC). Feedback received is that Scottish applications have been lacking in quality in some cases and UKRI have advised Georgina to begin working on applications as early as possible. With Georgina in position, we have a combination of understanding the ISCF landscape, developing relevant external connections and engaging with the academic community, we are confident that Edinburgh Napier will submit some strong applications for ISCF funding.

Thank you for completing this survey.