

Consultation on changes to our funding policies for knowledge exchange and innovation (KE&I)

Organisation	The Glasgow School of Art
<p>Question 1: how should the outcomes framework currently in place for UIF evolve to ensure University KEIF is structured to deliver on its renewed purpose and has the right strategic drivers and incentives in place?</p>	<p>Participating in UIF collaborative activities and regular discussions has been worthwhile, particularly as a means for institutions to exchange knowledge and good practice, and develop a shared set of priorities. Smaller institutions have benefited from the collective experience of the sector.</p> <p>While UIF's broad outcomes have had a galvanising and positive effect overall, there is scope for them to evolve in response to current priorities. We are in favour of the proposed thematic focus on green recovery, a well-being economy and transition to net-zero carbon society. This will entail at least a partial shift of emphasis for the sector, however, and if we have one caveat, it is that we must also continue to support excellent KE and innovation even when it does not directly contribute to these goals, providing it is not in opposition to them.</p> <p>The platform grant has been a successful element of UIF, and we strongly support continuation of this model to support necessary essential infrastructure in all institutions. SFC has entrusted HEIs to manage implementation according to institutional profile and priorities, but more explicitly defined expectations (e.g. about baseline levels of staffing, infrastructure and activities etc.) could help institutions to optimise internal investment decisions in support of KEIF objectives and the new national outcome framework.</p> <p>As a smaller institution, we have not been able to contribute equally to all UIF outcomes, and in terms of our practical response, have found that in practice there is not always a clear distinction between demand stimulation and different aspects of simplification. A small number of very clear updated outcomes would be preferable, perhaps including a degree of flexibility, so there is scope for HEIs to concentrate their efforts on activities where they will have the most impact.</p>
<p>Question 2: what are your views on the current UIF collaborative framework, how could this evolve and be sustained to support further good practice and purposeful collaboration? Is there a role for the Knowledge Exchange Concordat in this context or more generally?</p>	<p>The creation of the UIF Collaboration Manager role has had a positive impact and helped the UIF outcomes framework approach to progress. We are in favour of its continuation, or equivalent enabling mechanisms to support collective actions towards KEIF objectives. It could perhaps be expanded.</p> <p>We recognise the potential for the KE Concordat to enhance practice and performance in our</p>

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	<p>institution - it has been devised well and we would not object to there being a role for it in KEIF. There may be scope for the sector to develop collective resources to support KEC compliance by Scottish HEIs. Engagement with the Concordat could also help to improve the extent to which equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in KE and innovation. Any requirements must, however, take stock of institutional differences and be calibrated accordingly. Some HEIs would have more ground to cover before achieving full alignment, and may be at a less favourable point in the planning cycle, with fewer resources to devote to implementation.</p> <p>Arguably, the UIF whole-sector collaborative framework is better suited to some aspects of Scotland's KE and Innovation agenda than others. It has been an effective vehicle for sharing knowledge, forging collective understanding, agreeing on priorities and engaging with policy and funding initiatives. Initiatives such as standard contract templates have also been very valuable. But its success in driving the implementation of collaborative initiatives has perhaps been more qualified. The need to coordinate actions and develop consensus among a range of diverse institutions can result in only gradual progress, and institutions can sometimes achieve more acting independently or in smaller, more manageable and coherent partnerships. This has been our experience in developing SHIFT with RCS and QMU. Achieving the right balance between setting objectives at policy level, responding together across the whole sector, collaborating via smaller groups of HEIs, and unilateral action by HEIs will be crucial.</p>
<p>Question 3: what are your views on how the impact and outcomes of University KEIF should be measured, including the role of metrics or other indicators in any future funding and allocation model? We would welcome views on current or potential good practice regarding measuring net-zero KE&I activities and outcomes.</p>	<p>We would have no objection to continuing to supply KE income metrics to SFC and complete HESA HEBCI, and for these to have a role in determining formulaic allocations. These provide useful data, which can be reliably measured, although they do not tell the whole story.</p> <p>Any requirement for additional narrative reporting should be moderate, for there is a risk that smaller institutions with limited teams can spend a disproportionate amount of time on coordination and reporting tasks, which reduces their capacity for delivery. Aligning any new reporting with existing obligations, to improve efficiency and reduce duplication, would make sense.</p> <p>It is possible that REF impact could contribute to the funding and allocation model, although it will</p>

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	<p>already be factored into REG, and may not be directly aligned with KEIF priorities. Institutions will be tracking impact for the next REF, however, and such activity could potentially feed into KEIF reporting.</p> <p>Measuring net-zero activities and outcomes is likely to be challenging, given the wide range of potential interventions and difficulty of determining equivalent reliable measures for reporting purposes, particularly if linked to formulaic funding outcomes. Institutions may lack the capacity to calculate net zero impacts in-house, too.</p>
<p>Question 4: how could the University KEIF, with Interface, help support collaboration with colleges, collectively supporting Scotland’s SME base to be more innovative?</p>	<p>We welcome an increased role for colleges, and look forward to potential future collaborations. Good communications between those responsible for College KEIF and HE KEIF initiatives should be established, but regular operational meetings across the tertiary sector are likely to be unwieldy. Less frequent joint meetings - similar to the annual SFC/US RKEC - could be helpful. Competitive funding requiring joint working could drive FE/HE collaborations, and these could include activities in which students contribute directly. In some sectors, colleges may have better networks with SMEs, and could work with Interface to promote innovation opportunities to industry. FE and HE may also be able to collaborate around access to their facilities, and on skills development to build capacity to implement innovative practices.</p>
<p>Question 5: how could core capacity funding (College KEIF) best support colleges to be effective agents of KE&I? We would particularly like to learn from colleges directly on what KE&I means to them and where capacity is needed to deliver this effectively, which could include building on current practice.</p>	
<p>Question 6: we would welcome views on what would be an appropriate period for SFC to run the first cycle of College KEIF before formally reviewing it and establishing a mature model for future years.</p>	

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<p>Question 7: we would welcome views on the potential value of using College KEIF to create frameworks for collaboration and sharing of good practice across the colleges, and with universities.</p>	<p>There is a good rationale for collaboration between FE and HE towards achieving Entrepreneurial Campus ambitions, creating greater connectivity between skills development and research across both sectors.</p>
<p>Question 8: our review recommended that we co-design the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy with colleges and universities. We would welcome views on what is proposed in this consultation, including potential opportunities, weaknesses and gaps.</p>	<p>To achieve some of the Entrepreneurial Campus objectives, SFC will need to influence learning and teaching provision through the outcome agreement/national outcomes framework process. Within institutions, responsibility for KEIF agendas may not be integrated with that for L&T, and so it is essential that a holistic approach is taken.</p> <p>The co-design process should seek to identify the optimal mix of institutional provision (curricular and extra-curricular), shared HE resources and complementary external initiatives, such as Converge and the Scale-Up Consortium.</p> <p>Once determined, clear guidance from SFC on expectations for baseline levels of institutional delivery would help HEIs to invest appropriately in the required resources, and plan accordingly. An increased pool of entrepreneurially minded students and graduates is likely to require increased investment in supporting them.</p> <p>Such expectations should take scale and capacity into account. As a small institution, participating in hub and spoke programmes (based elsewhere) can be more practical for certain kinds of activities. We would also be potentially interested in exploring models for joint incubation resources, perhaps shared between HEIs (and Colleges) in a specific city or region. Activities such as market validation and prototyping could occur at this level.</p> <p>Consideration of disciplinary focus and economic sector alignment would help to determine an appropriate balance between generic and specialist provision. We have found it helpful to develop creative economy oriented enterprise support, just as other sectors will have distinct needs and priorities.</p>

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<p>Question 9: we would welcome evidence of current practice in Scotland (or elsewhere) to ensure we have an up-to-date picture of what is working well and upon which the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy could build on.</p>	<p>The ESG subgroup of RCDG has been an effective forum for promoting progress towards enterprise related objectives of UIF, and can continue to play a leading role in co-designing Entrepreneurial Campus, in conjunction with counterparts from the College sector. We support ESG's separate submission to this consultation.</p> <p>We believe that the SHIFT programme we developed with RCS and QMU is an example of good practice, targeted to specific sectors and types of enterprise activity, and we hope that KEIF will enable us to maintain provision and develop it further (e.g. associated micro credentials). The focused development process - with first iteration devised by three similar institutions, followed by expanded participation - could provide a model for aspects of Entrepreneurial Campus.</p> <p>In Scotland, initiative such as Strathclyde's Enterprise Pathway and RGU's Innovation Hubs seem to be effective models. We would welcome dissemination of good practice across the sector, and development of shared models.</p> <p>It would also be worth considering models from beyond Scotland and HE. In the creative economy, NESTA's (erstwhile) creative enterprise programme, or Watershed's Pervasive Media programme in Bristol are good examples.</p> <p>GSA worked closely with SIE, and would welcome the return of similar forms of support.</p>
<p>Question 10: the Review recommended that the university and college sectors join SFC in repositioning Innovation Centres (ICs) as stable long-term infrastructure investments. We would welcome views on the details of the proposed 'repositioning' as described in this consultation, including any opportunities, weaknesses and gaps.</p>	<p>We welcome the repositioning of innovation centres as stable, long-term infrastructure investments, and believe that through our core involvement in the DHI, in partnership with Strathclyde, this will enable GSA to make a significant contribution to KEIF wellbeing objectives over the longer term.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to the nature of the ICs' relationships to host institutions. We believe that the current model, with ICs embedded within HEIs, is both effective and cost-effective, but recognise that centres must remain accessible to the wider sector, industry and other bodies, and look forward to contributing to the discussion on future models. By continuing to be based within</p>

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	<p>HEIs, ICs will remain close to Scotland’s high-quality, cutting edge research and better able to link industry and other stakeholders to the research base.</p>
<p>Question 11: we would welcome views on how we could best strengthen the Innovation Centres’ relationship with universities and colleges, ensuring added value, sense of partnership and collaboration, avoiding duplication of effort etc. This would include opportunities for alignment and partnership with Interface, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and other relevant agencies and organisations.</p>	<p>There may be a need for enhanced coordination functions and structures, which could potentially involve some shared services, depending on revised IC operational models.</p> <p>Centralised/collective information and dissemination resources for the entire KEIF system may also be beneficial, to help all stakeholders navigate provision and raise awareness of opportunities, including those relating to all ICs. Perhaps this could form part of Interface's evolving role, building on the innovationcentres.scot site and other existing information sources. Additional investment in promotion of the system to potential user groups, with clear contact/entry points and processes, could drive engagement.</p> <p>Providing ongoing funding opportunities to support HE/industry innovation projects via ICs (and extending eligibility to colleges) will remain an important driver of collaboration, and could be further enhanced. ICs could also potentially increase their role as consortium members in joint applications for research and innovation funding from UKRI and other sources (without favouring those led by host institutions).</p>
<p>Question 12: we would welcome views on potential areas of future opportunity where the Innovation Centre model could help deliver outcomes for Scotland.</p>	<p>There may be scope to identify the ways in which the ICs most effectively support innovation within their target sectors, and draw on that collective expertise to develop innovation support services and resources that are more widely applicable.</p> <p>For instance, GSA contributes design innovation expertise to DHI, and has worked in this capacity on CSIC projects but there would be scope for us to expand this capability in order to apply our expertise in other contexts and sectors.</p> <p>We would also be interested in whether establishing ICs as long-term infrastructure would increase opportunities for other sectors of Government and the Enterprise Agencies to expand the degree to</p>

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	<p>which they work directly with the centres (and co-fund them) to deliver innovation services and infrastructure (as DHI works with NHS Scotland, and is involved in the Moray Growth Deal).</p>
<p>Question 13: we would welcome views on strengthening Interface’s relationship with universities and colleges, ensuring added value, sense of partnership and collaboration, avoiding duplication of effort etc. This would include opportunities for alignment and partnership with Innovation Centres, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and other relevant agencies and organisations.</p>	<p>Interface performs a valuable and effective role in Scotland’s innovation ecosystem, and we are in favour of it receiving stable, long-term infrastructure support. To strengthen relationships with universities and colleges beyond its already good links with the sector may require Interface to diversify into other forms of service provision (see subsequent responses). Closer links with ICs suggests enhanced specialisation in the sectors served by them, as well as the KEIF priorities. Interface already attends US RCDG and is represented (to our knowledge) on some management and governance structures for some activities within ICs, while HEIs are represented on Interface’s governance structures. Could there be value in additional annual strategic meetings between all of the HEIs and Interface, in order to refine priorities from the sector’s perspective? Could the relationship between Interface and KTP centres be strengthened further? Is there a potential role for Interface as an enhanced information hub for the entire KEIF system?</p>
<p>Question 14: if you have direct experience of working with Interface, we would welcome suggestions for evolutions to its operating model to help it develop even more effective support for productive relationships between businesses and our universities and colleges.</p>	<p>While always helpful if approached about other initiatives, our relationship with Interface is driven primarily by our receipt of targeted expertise searches, and innovation voucher applications and projects. Due to the nature of the model, expertise searches tend to be driven more by SME demand than by institutional strategic priorities, and there can be a degree of mismatch. We have not recently been in a position to discuss our strategic objectives in detail with Interface, but enhancing procedures to do so could improve alignment between our priorities and the needs of SMEs.</p> <p>Could HEIs also benefit from Interface’s extensive connections to Scotland’s SME base in other ways, with a higher volume of requests flowing from HEIs to SMEs via Interface, as well as in the other direction? For instance, in order to identify partners for student-led projects, placements and entrepreneurial internships?</p>
<p>Question 15: we would welcome general views, based on direct experience of the Innovation</p>	<p>Innovation vouchers are well established and (operationally) work effectively; they have supported a wide range of valuable projects at GSA over the years. Often the types of enquiries and projects that come to GSA, however, relate to practical or technical needs (e.g. design, visualisation or physical</p>

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<p>Voucher scheme, on how it could evolve and better support our system for KE&I.</p>	<p>prototyping), and once complete do not necessarily provide scope for continued development, while the staff who are interested in supporting this kind of KE are not necessarily those who are most research active. They also often involve very small micro enterprises, which have limited capacity for ongoing investment in larger R&D projects, and this can reduce the likelihood of ongoing collaboration or successful implementation.</p> <p>The introduction of Advanced/Follow On innovation vouchers has helped to address the relatively limited scope of the standard scheme, which is too small to appeal to all researchers. The student placement scheme is a positive development (we have one project underway), as is the Workforce IV (although we have not undertaken one yet).</p> <p>If budgets and funding regulations allowed, more flexibility to support larger projects could increase what could potentially be achieved, and increase interest among active researchers.</p> <p>A more strategic approach to matching SME interest to HE priorities and those of KEIF would also be beneficial.</p>
<p>Question 16: we would welcome views on widening the scope of Innovation Vouchers to encompass wider KE activity but retaining the key objective of using them as a means to promote first time collaborations and encourage longer-term relationships.</p>	<p>Our most fruitful Interface projects are often those in which our academics are establishing a new relationship with an SME, and then approach Interface to support a first collaborative project (rather than those originating as enquiries from Interface). Where there is already a degree of trust and common purpose, projects are more likely to have positive outcomes and longevity. There are other cases in which there is a well-established relationship between academic and SME, but they have not collaborated on a project together, and further clarity on the extent to which IVs could support such projects would be helpful. Similarly, there could be scope for IVs to support projects with graduate start-ups emerging from the Entrepreneurial Campus - which, while known to the institutions, would be new companies and first collaborative projects.</p> <p>In recent years, there has been an increased willingness by Interface to support projects with less directly commercial companies, including social enterprises and cultural organisations. We support this trend, and are keen to see it develop further; perhaps assessed on a range of possible outcome</p>

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	and impact measures, aligned with KEIF priorities, and not solely or primarily business outcomes (e.g. progress towards net zero or wellbeing objectives).
Question 17: how could colleges and universities help SFC understand, or monitor longitudinally, how many Innovation Vouchers have led to ongoing relationships? Are there cross sectoral digital solutions to this which can help us better understand the outcome we hope to achieve?	A digital system for efficient tracking of longitudinal impact would be beneficial, potentially linked to an annual reporting period, akin to the UKRI's use of ResearchFish.
Question 18: From experience of mission-led approaches elsewhere, how would you advise SFC to use its resources and investments to facilitate such activity in support of Scottish Government objectives for economic transformation?	<p>Mission-led approaches are an effective method of targeting investment to areas of greatest need, and would be consistent with the proposed KEIF focus on key priorities, such as net zero. Mission-led KEIF funding would be most productive if aligned with other sources of government and research/KE funding, to support leverage of investment into the Scottish sector, as indicated in the consultation document. A combination of infrastructure capacity and collaborative, project-based grant allocations may be the best way to achieve this, and allow for flexibility to respond to new developments in the wider UK system and commercial landscape.</p> <p>It will be important for the system to continue to support, in parallel, excellent research, KE and innovation in other fields, since not all worthwhile activity will be closely aligned to missions, and some institutions will lack the disciplinary expertise to contribute fully to all priority areas.</p>
Question 19: We would welcome views on the breadth of the role a KE&I Advisory Board could play and what stakeholder membership would give us the most effective support for SFC's role in the ecosystem.	The advisory board should reflect the needs of each of the elements within the KEIF system and its targeted beneficiaries, including HEI representation drawn from US RCDG/RKEC, and Innovation Centre board members. Given the priority focus on green recovery, net zero and wellbeing, board members with a sophisticated understanding of these agendas (beyond purely industrial/economic contexts) will be essential, and expertise in entrepreneurship would also be beneficial.
We may publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses themselves. Published responses may be attributed	Publish including name of organisation.

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to an organisation where this information has been provided but will not contain personal data. When providing a response in an individual capacity, published responses will be anonymised. Please confirm whether or not you agree to your response being included in any potential publication.