

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

Organisation	Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
<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>We would suggest that priorities could now evolve to align with the renewed strategic objectives of Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council, but the collaborative ethos and collective approach to success should remain. This has been one of the most positive outcomes of the UIF years: a connected and collaborative KE&I community in Scotland working together with shared ambition for success.</p> <p>When we have gathered a fuller picture of the success of the last five years it will be easier to articulate the most effective drivers and incentives. There is such diversity of strengths and experience in the HEI system, and a richer understanding and valuing of that diversity will ensure that the drivers and incentives work for the whole community.</p> <p>As a collective community we will need to reassess the 7 outcomes and re-assess their fit with new economic strategy, the post-Covid reality, SDG priorities, net zero, and key concepts like the wellbeing economy. There have, of course, been significant policy and contextual changes since they were set.</p> <p>The outcomes framework would be strengthened by switching to 3-year planning cycles, enabling longer term planning, collaborative effort and increased ambition for KE&I in Scotland.</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>In our experience, the KEC has been very effective in developing the institutional discourse around mission and culture, and in developing and connecting infrastructure. As it is not a competitive process, it encourages an honest reflection of strengths, opportunities and challenges. Not only does it open up the potential for meaningful collaboration across the HEI sector, it opens up the opportunity for more meaningful KE connections within and across our institutions, helping to develop a new understanding of KE and place it at the heart of our institutions.</p> <p>As a collective, we have shared ambitious targets for the UIF, but lack the resource for ongoing meaningful collaboration. However, at the Conservatoire, we have developed one very successful programme SHIFT, in collaboration with partners from GSA and QMU. Delivered annually as a 5-day intensive training programme, SHIFT supports 100 participants annually to develop entrepreneurial skills and thinking, supporting their start up ideas on graduation. The first three years of the</p>

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	<p>programme are about to be evaluated while the 4th programme is about to open for recruitment. The longer-term ambition to scale-up SHIFT would need further funding, and this is a good example of ambition vs resource.</p> <p>The working groups have been a critical part of the collaborative piece, building new relationships, and getting to grips with KE-related opportunities. While we are small, we have contributed to as many of these as we can.</p> <p>There is no doubt that the UIF has been a game changer for the Conservatoire as it gave us the means to participate actively in many groups and forums, at a level that had not been possible before.</p> <p>We see that the KEC has a positive place in a future structure, enabling reflection and continuous improvement and raising the status of KE & I within institutions.</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>The existing UIF model enabled a critical developmental phase in the growth of the KE&I system in Scotland. It was open, inclusive, and exploratory. However, even though we worked to gather collective evidence and impact, this did not always relate to the work that we each do, on the ground in our own institutions. The next model needs to take this learning and insight and strike a balance between each HEI's own journey of success, how they contribute to the wider ecology, and the collective story of success across the whole KE&I system.</p> <p>The Logic Model format that we used collectively seems to work well as a way of achieving a balance of narratives and numbers and can work well with a wide range of success scenarios from civic engagement to scaling businesses.</p> <p>Metrics and indicators that reflect quantity of activities and engagements and deeper-level outcomes and impacts are worth considering here also. HE-BCI offers some important metrics that could possibly be adapted. There are also questions of scale versus impact.</p> <p>As a small specialist institution, we would be interested in exploring how our metrics could begin to assess our relative impact for our size. Where do small specialists play a disproportionate role in</p>

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	<p>meeting national strategic objectives in relation to size? There is a danger that raw, unscaled, metrics will underplay the relative contribution of an institution like the Conservatoire.</p> <p>Impact case studies could also play a role in metrics and outcomes and could become a part of reporting protocols. These could permit a wider understanding of institutional impact, avoiding the linear conception of impact that underpins REF.</p> <p>Each HEI will have a different context and therefore different baseline. Ensuring that each baseline is aligned with the strategic priorities of our HEIs, with appropriate stretch targets, will set ambition for KE&I.</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>There is potential to work with colleges on the macro Challenges around place, green recovery and net zero. It is only the limited capacity of staff that creates barriers to this for the Conservatoire. We would welcome a chance to build closer relationships with the college sector and have worked closely with that sector in the past in key areas such as (theatre) production design.</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>N/A</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>	<p>Five years has been an appropriate length of first cycle for UIF.</p>
<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>A number of areas of value are apparent to us:</p> <p>Building capacity (It is not only our lack of capacity that inhibits collaboration with colleges; it’s theirs too.)</p>

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	<p>Education (For example, delivering a significant increase in availability and uptake of high quality, entrepreneurially- informed teaching which provides students with fundamental skills to develop their entrepreneurial journey.)</p> <p>Environment (Creating the wraparound conditions that will support students and staff to develop ideas and mindset. Examples include focus on improving diversity, embedding inter-disciplinarity, access to facilities and expertise.)</p> <p>Activity (Building out from existing national programmes which are delivering benefit e.g. Converge Challenge, Bridge 2 Business, while supporting universities and colleges to share learning and best practice from their existing portfolios. We could consider new inclusive programmes for students to build their entrepreneurial thinking; whether forming an enterprise is the goal or not.)</p> <p>Architecture (The architecture to support that change might be through sector wide agreements, a concordat-style approach, setting the good practice benchmarks or by using hubs and spokes where existing leadership in particular areas can be identified.)</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>The Conservatoire welcomes the Entrepreneurial Campus proposal and looks forward to co-creating this with partners. We particularly welcome the broad approach to entrepreneurship that actively encourages a more diverse entrepreneurial landscape, including the significant potential of artists and creative entrepreneurs to be supported to fully contribute to transformational change and a wellbeing economy. We are excited about the potential this presents for us to create a further step-change in how artists lead and contribute to economic and societal change.</p> <p>We have participated in the Enterprise Support Group working group (RCDG sub group), gathering insights and ideas from colleagues across the KE&I system. We therefore support the proposal submitted by the ESG and are confident that this offers scale, breadth and depth for the road ahead.</p> <p>We would supplement the ESG proposal with a couple of comments that relate to the particular context and expertise of the Conservatoire.</p>

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Education:

Entrepreneurial Campus has opened up a space for us to seek to connect our work in Learning and Teaching with that of our KE and Innovation team. This, along with an impending curriculum review for all undergraduate programmes at the Conservatoire, invites us to develop a thread from within the heart of our programmes through to our wraparound services and interventions of the KE&I team. This will greatly increase engagement and participation in our co-curricular offers, as well as allowing a better alignment of approaches, priorities and themes. This will allow us to develop a wider funnel approach for our more intensive initiatives in micro finance and start up support.

Environment:

The initiatives and support provided by our KE & Innovation team are broad and varied in scope, tailored to the areas of greatest interest and need for our community. As this work is led by the KE&I team, it always takes an interdisciplinary approach, aims to enhance the specific learning from within the formal programmes, and access a different pool of industry expertise to benefit the community, helping to forge new relationships and perspectives beyond the scope of their programme discipline. This enhances the experience of those who participate and also ensures that we are not duplicating learning that is already available to them elsewhere in their highly-vocational courses. There are very particular challenges for those working in the arts and creative industries, with more significant challenges than ever after the pandemic.

Activity:

Our Innovation Studio pilot over the next two years seeks to create a new pipeline of engagement and activity for our staff, students and recent alumni. It is framed around an Innovation Challenge model, and over two years will contribute £75k in micro finance initiatives, employ two Innovators in Residence, and help to catalyse, shape and articulate a collective contribution from across the Conservatoire in key thematic areas such as Green Recovery, Placemaking and Health and Wellbeing.

Our hope is that through this initiative and other bespoke approaches, we can create significant interest and growth in the Entrepreneurial Campus model as we explore what it means for us, how it can unlock ideas and potential, and draw in match funding.

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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 two key projects at the Conservatoire are Innovation Studio (www.rcsinnovationstudio.com) and SHIFT (www.shiftintoyourfuture.com).</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>Innovation Centres are not part of our engagement because of the particular focus of the existing Innovation Centres offer. Naturally, we would be interested in any ambition to extend the range of ICs into areas that relate to our expertise as a small specialist institution.</p> <p>As noted above, we have found that the KEC is an excellent tool for building infrastructure, and promoting cultural change with respect to KE&I.</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>Notwithstanding our comment about regarding the range of the current suite of ICs, we can see potential points of contact between the performing arts and (for example) the Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre; the Centre for Sensor and Imaging Systems; and The Data Lab. As the KE&I infrastructure is refreshed, might there be a moment for the ICs to reach out to institutions like ours, who have been on the margins of IC in the past? Although some ICs are wholly outside our areas of expertise, one could imagine an obligation or expectation to engage with the whole sector becoming part of the IC remit - perhaps mirroring the ethos of Interface?</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>We would especially welcome an IC on the Wellbeing Economy and would feel that we could contribute strongly to its work.</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</p>	<p>We have put much effort into our engagement with Interface and recognise the effort Interface puts into engaging with us. The issue of engagement with Interface, for us, is less about a sense of partnership with Interface, with whom we have a strong working relationship, but more about the specific programmes on offer. A renewed strategy to bring in those institutions on the margins, and development of new programmes that a conception of 'Innovation' that goes beyond the current</p>

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<p>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>confines of the Innovation Vouchers, might assist. Our sense is that Interface could broker a more inclusive approach if it were enabled to do so.</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>The operating model seems effective to us. As noted above, it is the programmes that can be ineffective in supporting innovation in our areas of expertise.</p>
<p>Question 15: we would welcome general views, based on direct experience of the Innovation Voucher scheme, on how it could evolve and better support our system for KE&I.</p>	<p>A refreshed approach to panel participation could be interesting in building the effectiveness of IVs in our areas of expertise, along with a more capacious understanding of innovation. Panel membership from institutions (including SSIs) could be a good development opportunity for colleagues as we build KE capacity and professional routes across the sector.</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>As noted above, a more capacious understanding of innovation would assist in widening the scope of IVs. In addition, it could be important to consider further support for the business that engage with this process, remembering the in the cultural sector and creative industries, many businesses are sole traders or microenterprises that are not well set up to engage with mechanisms like the IVs.</p> <p>Likewise, longer timescales could be useful in achieving the intended aims.</p> <p>Some flexibility around first-time collaborations could also help: in our sector, we have relationships with many, many external organisations, but often these are quite circumscribed (for example - a student placement relationship). If IVs were to recognise and support a new kind of engagement in the context of an existing relationship (for example, a product development relationship with a partner with whom we had previous had only a student placement relationship), then this could go a long way to increasing the effectiveness of the IVs in achieving their core ambitions for sectors (and an institution) like ours.</p>
<p>Question 17: how could colleges and universities help SFC understand, or monitor longitudinally, how</p>	<p>(We are unsure whether Interface already monitors this?)</p>

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<p>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?</p>	<p>Longitudinal reporting on successful IVs could form part of an evolved KE metrics return (for example, how many past IV initiated a partnership that is still live at the time of reporting? etc.)"</p>
<p>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>	<p>A sequenced programme of missions (say, a 5-year programme of 18-month missions) would assist in planning and engagement. The sequencing would be very important in offering the sector space and time to work together on one major mission at a time.</p> <p>At a very small scale, this is the approach we adopted in our Innovation Studio pilot - rather than present 'themes' or multiple challenges that run concurrently, we have identified three challenges through which we will work in sequence. This approach allows colleagues to plan their engagement, and to develop links, through time, between different societal challenges, offering (we think) the opportunity for a more coherent and coordinated response.</p>
<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.</p>	<p>We consider the proposed KE&I Advisory Board to be a strong idea with potential to drive an increasing scope of KE, build leadership and civic engagement, work with the sector, and hold a clear KE&I ambition for the nation.</p> <p>We would suggest that the Board needs people with experience of KE in its widest possible definition, and would benefit from a nomination process that avoided the 'usual suspects'. Imaginative approaches could assist in building a Board that could achieve these ends. For example, each institution could nominate individuals from business, wider public life, and key sectors with which they engage.</p> <p>We would note that some Boards are too 'lofty' and here, too, an imaginative approach could build a truly effective Advisory Board that includes among its membership a significant proportion of people with a sense of the mechanics of KE - ambitious people who live and breathe KE. This would involve pitching the nomination process rather differently from traditional advisory boards of the 'great and good', but we think there could be major wins from such an approach.</p>
<p>We may publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses</p>	<p>Publish information and excerpts from this survey response INCLUDING the organisation name.</p>

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themselves. Published responses may be attributed 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.