

## UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING - OUTCOME AGREEMENT 2023/24

### Executive Summary

1. This Outcome Agreement sets out the University of Stirling's ambitions and our commitment to delivering against our strategic objectives and Scottish Government national priorities in the academic year 2023/24. During AY 2023/24 we will launch a new institutional Strategic Plan, developed in close consultation with our university community, to articulate our new strategic ambitions to 2030. The new Strategic Plan builds upon our established successes in recent years to make an impact on people's lives and be a force for good in the world through priorities focussed on our students, our staff, our research, our engagement locally and globally and on the health and wellbeing of our community.
2. Providing an inclusive and welcoming high-quality learning and teaching experience for all our students, regardless of their background, remains a core ambition of the University. We are proud to be a destination of choice for students, both home and internationally with over 133 nationalities on campus contributing to our vibrant student community. Throughout 2023/24 the University will continue work to embed a culture of belonging and community across our diverse population and enhance the student experience through a programme of improvements across the physical and digital L&T estate.
3. At the University of Stirling, our research truly makes a difference to the world around us. Our mission-orientated and outcomes-based approach to research, conducted to the highest standards of quality and integrity, allows us to support and improve life for communities around the globe across the range of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A new Research & Innovation Strategy, due to launch in autumn 2023, identifies three interconnected missions that seek to make meaningful improvements to the quality of *spaces*, *places*, and *lives* in the next 10 years through an approach founded in our values.
4. The University recognises the need for a collaborative approach to address the challenges of the climate crisis. As a key partner in the Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal, the University has a central role to play in supporting the regional economic recovery and in driving progress towards a net-zero future. Detailed within this Outcome Agreement are the primary projects the University is leading to meet this objective, as well as our partnership projects to drive ambitions to achieving net-zero across the region.
5. While the environment in which the University, and the sector as a whole, operates continues to be subject to change, the University of Stirling will continue to be innovative and agile to navigate an evolving higher education landscape as we move forward into a new strategic period. Although the financial environment is challenging the University is well-placed to embark on this next strategic phase in 2023/24 building upon our successes in growing our financial indicators across student recruitment, international partnerships, and business engagement.

## Fair Access & Transitions

6. Through our inclusive approach to widening access to higher education, the University has consistently grown the number of Scottish MD20 undergraduate entrants and continued to exceed proportional targets. Our ambitions in achieving both the 2026 interim target and the 2030 target from the Commission of Widening Access (CoWA) are supported through our institutional [Admissions Policy](#), which aligns with the Universities Scotland Guarantee of Fairness and sets out our approach to contextualised admissions in recognition that not all applicants have equal opportunities. As such, eligible applicants are considered for an offer at minimum entry requirements – applicable to those who are a carer, are care-experienced, are estranged and from MD20 postcodes. Minimum entry requirements are actively promoted to applicants alongside significant information published on our [widening participation webpages](#). (CoWA recommendations 11 and 21).
7. The University recognises that a successful approach to widening access includes not only fair admissions practices but also targeted and relevant support for students when enrolled to support them to succeed. The [Reid Family Scholarships](#) are directly targeted for Scottish students from a widening participation background to help with financial pressures of living costs and tuition fees. These scholarships form part of our wider offering in line with our ambition that our students feel supported and confident when embarking on their university career and are supported to be successful, happy, and healthy. Part of our transition support includes a dedicated module for pre-arrival transition support, and personalised academic and personal support. Additionally, there is dedicated pre-application and transition support for care-experienced applicants, fully detailed within our [Corporate Parenting Plan](#).
8. The University recognises the importance of early engagement with students to build on and support students' aspirations for higher education. Our engagement with all four SHEP agencies (LEAPS, Lift Off, Aspire North and Focus West) continue to further develop. Additionally, in recent years we have continued to grow the number of available articulation routes to offer further access opportunities for applicants coming from college.
9. The University will continue to work closely with the Scottish Wider Access Programmes (SWAP), as well as offering our own foundation access courses such as '[Access to Degree Studies](#)'. These are campus-based part-time pathways to degree studies for those with few or no formal qualifications which aim to not only teach students the necessary subjects for their chosen degree, but to offer tailored support, guidance, and study strategies to ensure participants are ready for university level education. The University plays a key role in driving the activities of Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners (SCAPP), as the host University for the Development Co-ordinator role.
10. In partnership with Stirling Council, the University offers information, advice, and guidance sessions on accessing higher education as well as providing pathways to higher education support for refugees and asylum seekers. A number of University [Sanctuary Scholarships](#), continue to be offered for undergraduate (funded by the Carnegie Trust) and postgraduate

students in the UK who have applied for asylum or are staying in the UK as refugees or on humanitarian grounds.

## Priority Area 2: Quality Learning & Teaching

11. Providing a high-quality, safe, and supportive learning environment that enables our students, across all levels, to succeed throughout their student journey remains a key priority of the University. Our community learning approach includes a focus on connected face-to-face teaching on campus alongside inclusive hybrid teaching. This approach is informed by five learning and teaching principles: (i) be kind and supportive; (ii) be flexible and inclusive; (iii) encourage active learning and use of assessment for learning; (iv) engage students as responsible partners in their learning; and (v) build resilience into our teaching.
12. Through our dedicated Academic Development team, the University supports our staff to plan, design and implement high quality learning and teaching in a way that is accessible and engaging to our students. A range of support is available for teaching staff including specialist advice for Personal Tutors, learning technology guidance, academic development training events, and information on the University's continuing professional development (CPD) framework. This supports our staff to develop their own knowledge and skill base, as well as to gain recognition for their teaching practices. To further enhance learning and teaching practice and provide the best experience for our students, the University provides a route for staff to gain Advance HE accreditation as an Associate Fellow, Fellow, or Senior Fellow, providing recognition for contributions to learning and teaching and access to a supportive community to learn from best practice.
13. The University recognises the close links between ensuring our students feel a sense of belonging with their success and wellbeing, and this forms an integral part of our pedagogical practice. Recent projects in this area have included 'Building Resilient Learning Communities' which aimed to explore what an ideal learning community would look like from both our students and staff with the recommendations of the project to be taken forward in 2023/24. The University continues to deliver the '*Be Connected*' programme, which runs throughout the year providing events, activities, and resources to enable our community to meet new people and learn new skills.
14. Supporting a physically and mentally healthy community remains a key priority for the University. Our approach to supporting student mental health is set out within [our Mental Health Strategy 2021-2024](#), developed in partnership with the Students' Union, which aims to foster and nurture a culture and environment that respects, protects, promotes and enhances the mental health and wellbeing of all students and staff to enable them to thrive and achieve their full potential. Following investment in our recently redeveloped Sports Centre, the University has been ranked within the top 5 globally and first in the UK for our sports facilities and campus environment in the 2022 [International Student Barometer](#).
15. Providing world class learning, teaching and social spaces is core to University's commitment to provide an excellent experience across the student journey. Through a transformative

programme of campus infrastructure developments, the University has continued to enhance its learning, teaching and social spaces to encourage connections and engagement across our communities. One of the key projects is a redevelopment of our learning spaces – involving a complete and consistent modernisation of the University’s core teaching spaces both in terms of digital learning technologies and refurbished rooms. This first stage of the project to upgrade teaching spaces is underway, and throughout 2023/24 further enhancements will be developed to make best use of space on our campus.

16. The student voice is paramount in developing and designing improvements, not only to the student experience but more widely across the institution. Students are encouraged to provide feedback on their learning experience to drive improvements through student staff feedback committees (SSFCs); elected module, programme, and faculty officers; early semester check-ins; module evaluations and cross-institutional student surveys. The student voice played a key role in the consultation phase for the University’s new Strategic Plan, with a number of targeted on-campus consultation events to provide opportunities for our students to shape the future of the institution.

### **Priority Area 3: Coherent learning provision**

17. The University of Stirling has a firm commitment to ensuring our graduates leave University with the knowledge and skills they need to progress their careers and succeed. Our course portfolio is closely aligned with the skills needs of prospective students, employers, and the wider economy. This is primarily achieved through Labour Market Information (LMI) research, close joint working with key professional bodies and organisations for each Faculty and course, to embed labour market information into the curriculum.
18. Recognising the continued demand for skills in STEM and particularly the skills need identified within the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, the University’s course portfolio offers a range of STEM courses. Our student-led Women in STEM society, works with Equate Scotland and provides a community to celebrate and connect women studying STEM within the University, and with potential employers.
19. Through the centralised Student Skills & Employability (SSE), a suite of learning resources is available to support staff in embedding employability and skills into the curriculum. These emphasise the importance of work-based learning, and business engagement strategies for employability development. Within the Stirling Management School an International Business Advisory Board, with members from across a range of sectors, advise on the taught portfolio of programmes and connect the faculty with businesses and strategic partners to maximise opportunities for external engagement, knowledge exchange and collaboration.
20. Through our regional partnerships, the University is also playing a critical role in delivering learning and development opportunities for students and staff working within the NHS. The Forth Valley University College NHS Partnership, launched in 2023, aims to bring transformational change to the health of the area through the delivery of new learning and development opportunities for students and staff working across local health and care

services. The partnership will establish a regional skills academy to deliver a world-class programme of clinical health improvement and social care education, and a quality improvement and people academy to share best practice, develop leadership skills and build career progression opportunities.

21. With a course portfolio that is responsive to skills demands, and embedding work-based skills and employability within the curriculum it is the University's ambition that our graduates will be equipped with the skills and knowledge that employers are seeking to help them make a difference to organisations worldwide. The benefits of this approach are reflected in the University's positive performance in the overall Graduate Outcomes survey with 95.3% of Scottish-domiciled undergraduates being in a positive destination (employment and/or further study).

#### **Priority Area 4: Work-based learning and skills**

22. The University recognises the value of providing access to work-related learning opportunities and has therefore undertaken significant work to embed opportunities for experiential learning throughout the curriculum. This includes a dedicated cycle of engagement for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to [secure student consultancy placements and projects](#) with relevant sectors. Our dedicated [University of Stirling Work Placement and Project Policy](#) provides guidance for staff developing or delivering a module or programme containing work-based learning to ensure it is a positive, safe and successful experience for all involved. The work-based learning Riipen platform continues to be embedded across the University to identify, monitor, and support work-based learning opportunities, led by the SSE.
23. The University continues to deliver a Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) in BSc Data Science. This course was developed during a critical time in response to Scottish economic requirements and remains relevant to economic needs through liaison with industry partners. In addition to our GA programme, the University has this year partnered with Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) in an innovative scheme to create employment opportunities for young people across the Forth Valley. The innovative scheme will see the University link employers with schools in partnership with DYW to offer work experience, apprenticeships, mentoring and training courses. The Memorandum of Understanding is the first of its kind among City Deal partners in Scotland and has the potential to create hundreds of employment opportunities.
24. Recognising the importance of providing work-based learning and skills to young people throughout all stages of their education, the University has this year launched a new Career Ready Placement scheme, providing school pupils with paid internship opportunities to work with Experts on the Hydro Nation Chair programme, who are delivering research and innovation to support Scottish Water's Net Zero strategy.
25. Through the Stirling Management School, the University has a number of Entrepreneur-in-residence roles, to help students, alumni and staff with practical advice and mentorship for

their business ambitions. This includes a digital entrepreneur in residence to help ensure teaching aligns with industry expectations while encouraging spin-out and start-up business.

### **Net Zero and Environmental Sustainability**

26. The University is firmly committed to playing its role in addressing the global climate crisis and supporting a transition to a fairer, greener world. Recognising the need to act urgently, and the vital role that universities play in leading the development of sustainable solutions, the University has committed to the principles set out in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992) and achieving net zero by 2040. Through signing both the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\) Accord](#) and the [Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges](#) campaign, the University has publicly committed not only to protecting our environment and to the reduction of our own carbon emissions but also to the development of a range of socially sustainable solutions. Additionally, the University is a key signatory to the [Forth Valley for Net Zero](#) which commits Stirling to sharing best practice with our strategic partners and to help the region achieve net zero status by 2040.
27. Through the University's 2022 – 2028 Sustainability Plan, (available to download [here](#)) we have committed to focus on six key themes, mapped to the UN SDGs. This includes carbon (energy) management; sustainable waste and recycling; finance and sustainable procurement; people, green travel and partnership, sustainability in teaching, learning and research; and climate adaptation and biodiversity. The ambitions of the UN Sustainable Development Goals are therefore embedded across the scope of the University's activities to support a transition to a fairer, and more sustainable world. Our success in this area to date is demonstrated by the results of the most recent Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, for which the University was ranked joint 82<sup>nd</sup> within the Zero Hunger SDG, and within the top 200 globally for Climate Action, Life below water, life on land, and Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions.
28. Throughout 2023/24 the University will undertake a range of activities to drive forward these key ambitions including:
  - a. Following an extensive exercise to determine our full greenhouse gas inventory for scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, the University will review potential district heating electrification and on-site renewable generation. Both of which will assist in overall energy decarbonisation projects.
  - b. Delivery of energy decarbonisation measures across campus, through SFC funding. The funding will focus on projects across solar PV and other energy saving measures.
  - c. Energy efficiency improvements including insulation improvements to student accommodation, alongside a range of enhancements across the estate including boiler upgrades at Machrihanish marine research laboratories and air source heat pumps at Airthrey Castle Yard residences.
  - d. The University was successful in securing funding through Paths for All for the continuation of the Active Travel Officer post, free bike maintenance sessions for staff and students every week for a year, active travel events and funding towards the running of

the Nextbike bike share scheme. This directly supports our aim to improve green travel options within our estate.

29. The University submits Public Bodies Climate Change Reporting annually via the Sustainable Scotland Network. Our baseline and total greenhouse gas emission for scope 1, 2 and scope 3 business travel emissions can be found [here](#).

## **High-Quality Research & Innovation**

### Effective use of SFC core research grants in 2023/24

30. As the University commences a new Strategic Period from AY 2023/24, the range of enabling strategies will also be refreshed and renewed including the Research & Innovation Strategy. This will see the implementation of special initiatives to support our research environment, including through the use of the Research Excellence Grant (REG) to support our four key pillars of success: People, Partnership, Place, and Opportunity. The University uses REG to support research capacity and our research base in areas of strategic importance to the research portfolio, and REG grant is shown as income against each of our five faculties. Specific examples of some of the projects supported by this investment are detailed within the supporting case studies.
31. Through the Research Postgraduate (RPG) funding, the University has delivered a number of initiatives that have supported the growth and diversity of the PGR community. RPG funding supports the University's contribution towards collaborative Doctoral Training networks that receive funding from external bodies such as UKRI, as well as enabling the University to consider exceptional cases to waive international fees to support talent and create a platform for future international collaborations. Our research postgraduate cohorts are supported through a comprehensive researcher development programme, developed in partnership between the Institute for Advanced Studies within the Research, Innovation and Business Engagement directorate.

### Supporting sustainability and future research excellence

32. The new Research & Innovation Strategy 2023 – 2030, due to launch in autumn 2023/24, sets out our intention to be research intensive, with a balance of discovery and applied research, where our research community contributes to societal, environmental, and economic development in partnership with communities, policy makers, governing bodies, and business. Recognising that interdisciplinary research is one of the University's key strengths, the University will continue to grow this through a mission-orientated approach, across our three interconnected missions of Spaces, Places and Lives, to generate new knowledge, innovation, and solutions to deliver substantial benefits locally and globally. Our mission-orientated and outcomes-based approach will enable the University to deliver valuable outcomes and respond to the climate, biodiversity, and health emergencies through our key areas of strength.

33. One of the key pillars of our Research & Innovation Strategy is in 'Partnership', recognising the added value that our strategic partnerships with other universities, third sector organisations and businesses can add to our multi-disciplinary research activities. Within the next year, and throughout the lifetime of the R&I strategy, the University aims to grow its research portfolio significantly in turn increasing the value of our research and innovation awards and income. In this, we will be supported by the enabling infrastructure delivered through the City Region & Growth deal programme, partnerships, and investments. The deal, delivering a transformative step change to the region's economy through collaboration across the region, brings an investment package of £214m to the region, with key projects for the University including the National Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Hub (NATIH), Scotland's International Environment Centre (SIEC) and the Intergenerational Living Innovation Hub.
34. The NATIH, due to open in 2025, will be a pioneering innovation centre set up to drive the UK's ambitions to become a world leader in modern aquaculture practice. Building on the expertise of the University's Institute of Aquaculture, the NATIH will ensure that students are equipped with the skills the blue food economy of the future will require, translate ground-breaking scientific research into practical applied solutions that support economic development in communities across the globe and place UK expertise and technology at the centre of efforts to support a sustainable international industry and global food security.
35. SIEC is a cutting-edge research and policy hub at the University and state-of-the-art training facilities and environmental business incubator in Clackmannanshire, providing the best possible conditions and infrastructure for business to flourish and ensure a cleaner, greener, and healthier environment for future generations. The SIEC hosts the [Hydro Nation Chair](#) which is a leading initiative to deliver sustainable water management in Scotland. The [Forth Environmental Resilience Array](#) (Forth-ERA), a multi-million pound investment through the SIEC, is now underway and will provide the region with the world's first green recovery platform, creating a regional living laboratory across the Forth Valley. Linking in with the SIEC in 2023/24 will be a new Living Lab with a community-led food growing project using renewable energy in partnership with Clackmannanshire Council funded by the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme.
36. Through the ground-breaking plans for an Intergenerational Living Innovation Hub as part of the City Deal, our leading researchers in ageing and dementia design will work with our partners in healthcare, design, and construction to lead efforts to transform the lives of older people and those with the dementia. Plans for the hub are progressing and it is intended to act as a testbed for the latest technological, health and social care, architectural, and streetscape solutions to develop innovative ways for an ageing population to live, work and socialise.
37. The University's talented research staff – and their recruitment, development, and retention therein – are critical to research sustainability. This is reflected in the placement of our research community at the heart of the new R&I Strategy, which identifies key commitments to support sustainability across our community in the coming 7 years including: building



capacity within our community for staff to develop their research and innovation portfolios; creating professional development opportunities and recognition to support inclusive teams that nurture leadership across career stages and activities; developing our talent pipeline with continued support and focus on our doctoral candidates, and early to mid-career researchers.

#### Enabling an excellent research environment and positive cultures

38. Through a diverse and inclusive research community, the University combines different skills, perspectives, and areas of expertise that collectively contribute to our research ambitions. All of our research and innovation activity is undertaken to the highest standards of excellence and research integrity, co-producing research, knowledge generation, and solution-focussed outcomes within equitable partnerships.
39. The University's commitment to fostering a sense of belonging is further reflected our approach to supporting our research community. Our research community, comprising academics and researchers, technical and professional service staff, research students, partners, research participants and beneficiaries share in our values and missions. To promote a healthy research culture across the University, we are engaged in a wide range of activities to amplify the collective understanding of how individuals across our research community are contributing to our research and innovation endeavours. This includes our annual [Festival of Research](#), which stimulates discussions on topics of interest to the researcher community and acts as a platform to showcase research and future plans, celebrate successes and facilitate networking opportunities. The University has recently introduced a new Research Culture Champions Network to share good practice highlighted at the Research Culture Awards within the Festival of Research. The champions are role models and represent different aspects of the University's research culture, whether they are a professor leading large research groups, academics working closely with PGRs or early-career researchers who are our professors of the future.
40. The annual statement on research integrity is available on our website [here](#). Additionally, the University is a signatory to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, with the most recently published annual report available on our website [here](#).

## **University Innovation Fund 2023/24**

### **Introduction**

The University of Stirling is pleased to submit this paper outlining our planned use of our grant allocation from the University Innovation Fund (UIF) in Academic Year (AY) 2023-24. As previously, we are working to increase engagement with activity in support of UIF objectives, with particular reference to a green economic recovery, a well-being economy and just transition to a net zero carbon society. Innovation is core to the University's activities and our forthcoming Strategic Plan illustrates our commitment in this area. Our institutional mission focuses on excellence, through our research activity, outcomes for our students, as well as sustainability in all contexts to create positive impact within our region and beyond.

### **Contribution to national outcomes**

We continue to pursue the outcomes and engage with collaborative projects in the areas of demand stimulation, entrepreneurialism, international and equality and diversity. Our work in relation to UIF outcomes is underpinned by our UIF funding. The actions associated with the outcome that we lead are clustered under the heading 'Inclusive Growth' and focus on collaboration to enhance understanding of the potential that can be achieved through universities engaging with City Region and Growth Deals. In addition, we will continue to contribute directly to the Enterprise Support Group and all its sub-groups g Accelerators, Social Enterprise (see Outcome Four - Entrepreneurialism). All these areas are focused on maximising growth potential and leveraging connectivity with partners and stakeholders, as well as sharing best practice to promote a comprehensive and consistent approach across the sector.

Outcome One: Demand Stimulation: Demand for innovation in the Scottish business base can best be stimulated by enhancing the appetite for innovation (including new start-up businesses). We will continue to focus on enterprise and entrepreneurship, as well as collaboration with established businesses (PA5). Our Enterprise Programme is highly collaborative with strong links to enterprise organisations throughout Scotland. We continue to look for ways to strengthen partnerships to maximise the opportunities for entrepreneurs to build skills and develop successful businesses (PA5). We will support mechanisms that facilitate academic-SME collaboration and skills development (PA5).

Outcome Two: Simplification / Commercialisation: We remain committed to adopting standardised contracts terms and post project referral protocols (PA7 & PA8). We pursue and enhance engagement with key sectors including aquaculture, environment, and healthy ageing, focusing on areas where the University can offer distinctive strengths (PA6).

Outcome Three: Simplification / Greater Innovation: We actively contribute to the sharing of knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy. Allied to this is our significant role within City Region and Growth Deals - innovation is key to transformation and economic recovery and development (PA3). We engage actively with professional development organisations (ARMA, PraxisAURIL) to enhance the training and development support available to university research and innovation staff (PA4).

Outcome Four: Entrepreneurialism: Through our Enterprise Programme, we will continue to support students, graduates, and staff to develop their entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial skills. Within this work, we include social enterprise, a distinctive area that resonates with the values of our students

and staff. We are enhancing our Enterprise Programme offering to Forth Valley College students and will be expanding our offering through our lead role in the delivery of projects within City Region and Growth Deals as evidenced through a specific enterprise programme being delivered through Scotland's International Environment Centre (PA1). The support delivered through the University of Stirling Innovation Park continues to not only significantly increase the number of start-up and scale-up businesses supported, but also facilitates increased teaching and research connections and enhanced opportunities for student and graduate entrepreneur mentoring and incubation (PA1 & PA2). We continue to work with the life sciences, digital and creative sectors to enhance work-based learning (PA2). We are an active member of the Enterprise Support Group and all its sub-groups (e.g., Accelerator, Social Enterprise).

Outcome Five: International: We recognise that to be globally connected, we must continue to build our international links with partner universities, organisations, and people around the world; produce research with global relevance and impact; and graduating students as global citizens. We prioritise economic and social benefit through knowledge exchange, support for business innovation, skills training, and in-country capacity building. We will continue to offer full access to our Enterprise Programme for our broad cohort of international students at Stirling (links to PA10 within Outcome 6). We continue to believe that our increasing range of R&D collaborations will offer opportunities for businesses to collaborate internationally (PA11).

Outcome Six: Inclusive Growth and Social Impact: We continue to lead the workstream relating to this Outcome. We aim to enhance connections between universities to enable them to deliver economic, social, and cultural benefits. The main focus continues to be the engagement of universities with City Region and Growth Deals. Sharing best practice and experience is seen as being of particular value and we are continuing to work with the UIF Collaboration Manager to facilitate the achievement of these aims (PA10). Stirling is a place where everyone is treated with respect and where ability – not background – is valued. We are open with one another and support people with specific needs; we acknowledge difference and respect the right of students and staff to hold differing views.

Outcome Seven: Equality and Diversity: We continue to positively promote equality and diversity for all staff and students, including understanding where there may be barriers to full diverse and equal engagement in innovation and enterprise. This is supported through our continued participation in initiatives including the Equality Action Forum, HR Excellence in Research, Athena Swan, and the Aurora Programme.

### **UIF Funding Allocation**

We acknowledge the structure of the UIF funding ahead of the introduction of the KEIF and confirm that we will continue our commitment to invest above the required match funding amount in AY2023-24 in the following ways: through our enhanced Innovation & Enterprise support structure, enabling enhanced business engagement and development and an expanding enterprise support programme; continuing investment into the University of Stirling Innovation Park (USIP) as one of our vehicles for delivering innovation and commercialisation support (specifically business incubation); expanding programmes of: i) enterprise support; ii) knowledge exchange, iii) business engagement and development. We remain committed to supporting the further development of ongoing SFC review plans, including the University KEIF.

### Uplift in UIF Funding for 2023/24

It is important to consider the impact of the uplift within the overall context of our UIF-related activities. We are committed to supporting the strategic drivers in the Innovation Strategy and Entrepreneurial Campus blueprint, both within our own institutional activities and also collaboratively within the sector and look forward to the opportunities for co-working and co-production that this approach will bring.

One of the key priority areas for us is greater innovation in the economy leading to greater productivity and sustainability. Ambitions around green recovery, a well-being economy and net zero are shared by the University, outlined within the institutional sustainability policy and associated sustainability plan. These ambitions are further embedded within our Enterprise programme, including partnerships with Social Shifters and Women's Enterprise Scotland among others, alongside a [programme](#) of public engagement capturing these themes. The ambitions for net zero, a green recovery and a well-being economy map on to our values as well as areas of distinctive excellence in research and innovation. This is evidenced through our City Region & Growth Deal Programme, including Scotland's International Environment Centre, where innovation and enterprise are key enablers of our strategic ambitions. The potential for collaboration in this space is great and substantial bids have been, and will be, developed in these areas leverage additional funding. All projects within our programme have a structure that supports innovation through business support, commercialisation and start-up support including incubation facilities.

We welcome the launch of the Entrepreneurial Campus blueprint and all that it seeks to achieve. We are working to ensure that the Calls to Action are connected with our full range of innovation and enterprise activities and related support services. We align with the regional ecosystem through our close working relationship with local providers of business support as well as our role leading the innovation theme in the Stirling & Clackmannanshire City Region Deal. Through a focus on 'place', we are working with young people (school age) to inspire them in relation to the challenges and opportunities, including entrepreneurial approaches, which might inspire them through our collective move to net zero. Our forthcoming Strategic Plan (2023-2030) and underpinning Research & Innovation Strategy will strengthen our commitment to developing an entrepreneurial mindset in our students and staff. We are embracing the potential to review and enhance our curriculum offering by embedding entrepreneurial development; and additional funding through the UIF uplift will be a contributor to the extension of this provision. In parallel we will continue to enhance our extra-curricular support for student start-ups, maintaining our year-on-year positive trajectory of engagement and businesses supported. Within our provision, we are continuing to engage with external expertise to provide additional value to our start-up support offering, specifically with input from Converge and Codebase through its core and Techscaler offerings. We also provide funding to enterprises that we support through our Enterprise Programme via resources made available to us as a member of Santander Universities UK; it is our intention to use a proportion of our UIF uplift to establish an investment fund to support more new start-ups, enabling them to establish additional capacity in their operations and, therefore, accelerate their contribution to the local and national economy. Our enhanced Business Engagement & Development function is well-placed to support spin-out activity when opportunities arise.

We acknowledge that innovation along with structures to work with business and encourage talent will drive national and regional economic success. We fully focus on strengthening regional economies and we are committed to further enhancing our regional economic and social contribution and are

developing clear plans for this enhancement. Within that context, we are developing our thinking around the Strategy's Programmes of Action including our engagement in innovation clusters, e.g., energy transition (through Scotland's International Environment Centre), health and life sciences (through our partnership with NHS Forth Valley and Forth Valley College), and data and digital technologies. We are supportive of an Innovation Investment Programme and fully recognise the need to apply investment in the priority areas with greatest potential impact and welcome the link to an expanded portfolio of UK and EU innovation funds; we would also welcome new models of investment in order to support innovative businesses most effectively. We are keen to support the development of the Research Commercialisation Action Plan and would be happy to input in light of our own collaborations with industry, and also support the priority to retain resultant commercial activity in Scotland; our work in supporting entrepreneurship would also be relevant in this context and the link to the Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint is acknowledged.

The National Productivity Programme's focus on diffusing the benefits of innovation for productivity gains represents a very clear form of impact for the SME sector. Coordination of the Innovation Adoption Referral Charter is very much welcomed and a real step forward towards a truly joined-up ecosystem. The Innovation Scorecard is also noted and the need for monitoring and evaluation is acknowledged as are the proposed metrics to underpin this approach; we would encourage that other methods of monitoring are used in addition to metrics to really gain a true picture of the scale of innovation achieved; we would also urge that there is clarity between the 'convert' and 'commercialise' strands of the Scorecard to ensure that these stages are properly understood.

We continue to focus our innovation and enterprise activity in alignment with the ambitions set out in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the Innovation Strategy, recognising the key role that universities play in enabling the realisation of the objectives of both. We are actively planning for further embedding of enterprise and entrepreneurialism across the campus.

Through our active participation in RCDG, we will continue to support and enable collaborative activities, utilising the UIF uplift to support our activities in sharing experience and best practice and ensuring that a coordinated approach delivers impactful change.

We continue to work very closely with the UIF Collaboration Manager, both in terms of inputting into initiatives and discussions that they are leading and also including them in sector-wide events that we are leading to encourage contact and foster connectedness. The collaborative activity that we lead on inclusive growth is delivered in conjunction with the UIF Collaboration Manager to ensure that all related activities are coordinated and feed into other UIF outcomes as appropriate.

The requirement for completion of the HEBCI Return is noted and is prioritised; we have a process that underpins the gathering of the appropriate data that has been established over several years.

As with HEBCI information, the requirement for data to be returned to SFC as part of the KE Metrics Return is also noted; again, we have a process that underpins the gathering of this data that is well established.



## Outcome Agreement between the University of Stirling and the Scottish Funding Council for AY 2023-24

### On behalf of the University of Stirling:

Signed:

Print name: Professor Sir Gerry McCormac

Position: Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Date: 8 December 2023

Signed:

Print name: Harry Adam

Position: Chair of Court

Date: 8 December 2023

### On behalf of the Scottish Funding Council:

Signed:

Print name: Karen Watt

Position: Chief Executive

Date: 15 January 2024

