

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

Organisation	Perth College UHI
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?	N/A
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?	N/A
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.	N/A
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>While this question is geared towards universities, Perth College UHI is a key partner within the University of the Highlands and Islands which individually and collectively has strong relationships with businesses of all sizes including small and micro businesses.</p> <p>Many of the staff within Academic Partner Colleges like Perth College UHI deliver all levels of FE, HE and Post Graduate provision as well as undertaking research. This tertiary model encourages collaboration with businesses of all sizes across the partnership to ensure that business innovation needs can be addressed by the most relevant staff within either the College or the University or both. This collaboration is supported through the UHI's Knowledge Exchange Team.</p> <p>This work could be further enhanced through Interface service provision offering equal access</p>

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	<p>relationship with Colleges as it has with Universities. If its advisory and funding support mechanisms could be directly offered in ways that would support the innovation opportunities generated through College relationships in a similar way to how the relationship between universities and Interface works then that would stimulate greater levels of engagement which would increase the numbers of engagements able to be progressed towards funding, particularly with SMEs who already have lower levels of capacity within their organisations to engage in these types of projects.</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>Colleges' relationships with businesses are strong and wide ranging and both regionally and nationally focussed. Colleges' have vocationally focussed campuses that bring benefit to businesses of all sizes and stages of development. The current funding mechanism through delivery of a credits-based model equating to 40 hours of learning per credit is not conducive to creating KE & innovation and generating development opportunities with businesses.</p> <p>This is particularly relevant when engaging with small and micro-businesses which in many College regions, including in Perthshire and across the Highlands and Islands Region equate to in excess of 95% of the business base. These businesses report that they find it difficult to devote time for a qualification-based intervention. SMEs must have measurable impacts upon their business for KE and Innovation and this is not generally measurable by qualifications for employees or proprietors. These businesses would however benefit from working with staff from their regional College to scope an intervention that would make a significant difference to the productivity of their business. For those businesses, this may be a product, process or a workforce development innovation which would make a significant difference to their business in the form of efficiencies, productivity impacts and growth in turnover and employment.</p> <p>These smaller businesses require a disproportionately high level of time commitment to progress these discussions and to develop innovation and knowledge exchange activities.</p> <p>Colleges' track record of engaging with businesses of all sizes along with a clear track record of supporting the widening access agenda with engaging a diverse workforce would ensure businesses</p>

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would receive significant benefits from knowledge exchange (KE) and innovation projects supported through this fund.

If Colleges had access to a core capacity funding mechanism that was flexible to enable the Colleges to support the needs of businesses of all sizes, similar to the Flexible Workforce Development Fund (FWDF), this would increase the impact that Colleges could deliver with all businesses and would increase the innovation and KE activity across the business base.

This should support new and additional resource within the College sector to ensure that a clear and dedicated focus on this activity can be recruited to work with College academic staff to provide the technical advice for a business. Those academic engagements with businesses should also be supported through this fund.

It is recommended that the fund provides for the following:

- Fund should be flexible, enabling an agile and responsive support for Colleges to engage with businesses on KE and Innovation and to enable this fund to be utilised in ways that will be most impactful for each individual institution
- Fund should encourage a focus on inclusive growth and would fit with the National Strategy for Economic Transformation to support innovations in Leadership and Workforce Development, enterprise and knowledge exchange interventions with businesses
- Fund should support any relevant costs incurred by Colleges and Universities to deliver this activity
- Fund should enable collaborations between academics and businesses in order to co-create interventions that will lead to increased productivity
- Fund would enable academic staff to be released to support industry-based project and in turn support industry upskilling of academic staff

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Companies supported through the fund would demonstrate impacts generated from the engagement with the College resulting from the interventions supported- Fund should be awarded for a period of a rolling 3 year basis to ensure continuity of service provision to the business community- Flexibility of modes of delivery to enable rural and disadvantaged individuals to engage- Fund enabling businesses to release staff to undertake KE and Innovation related CPD- Straightforward reporting mechanism for participating businesses, Colleges and Universities <p>Relevant interventions of Colleges that should enable mechanisms for KE and Innovation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Support across all elements of the Innovation Pipeline- Workforce innovations, skills development- Research interventions for businesses or organisations- Access to specialist facilities, equipment, resources and expertise within Colleges and Universities- Engagement with international partners in KE which will enhance businesses in each partners country and/ or which will share good practice for capacity building within Scotland's Colleges- Consultancy activities which support new interventions for those businesses- These interventions should be able to be contextualised towards regional needs |
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	<p>- Scholarships (50 are offered to students in Perth College each year funded by businesses to support an experience of benefit to both the student and the business). Many of these can be focussed as KE and Innovation projects to provide a platform for a more focussed KE intervention with that business beyond the scholarship.</p> <p>- Enterprise skills provided to students within all courses. These require a greater level of investment to increase the conversion rate of students establishing businesses beyond their course.</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>This should be reviewed after a period of 3-5 years to enable the funding to become established and to support businesses at a time which suits their needs and which is not restricted by either fiscal and academic years. There should be recognition that this activity takes time and a significant level of engagement with a business before impacts are able to be demonstrated. A 3-5 year period would enable a reasonable time over which valuable interventions delivered through the fund could be evaluated with associated impacts able to be quantified.</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>Colleges already have strong networks in place through Colleges Scotland and College Development Network to share good practice. The Business Development Directors Group would be the most relevant group where customer experiences and impacts could be gathered, shared and disseminated in collaboration with SFC. Organisations like Interface could further support the sharing between the College and University sectors.</p> <p>As already indicated in question 4, Colleges which are part of the UHI partnership already have staff who deliver FE vocational skills, HE qualifications and undertake industry focussed research. Greater levels of support to Colleges at the inception phase of this fund would provide an opportunity for Colleges to invest in the resources to grow the capacity in this space by sharing across the FE/ HE skillsets to enhance the opportunities for businesses.</p> <p>Sharing good practice in KE and Innovation back from universities experiences over a number of years into College's newer relationships would be welcome to ensure that lessons learned can be shared</p>

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with pitfalls avoided at an earlier stage.

There are some baseline current examples of where existing knowledge exchange works well and which can be built upon to extend this approach across other activities. For example, Perth College UHI hosts the Centre for Mountain Studies. This internationally renowned research centre undertakes knowledge exchange and innovation projects relating to the economic and environmental sustainability of uplands within Scotland and internationally. Funding mechanisms have typically been from EU funding sources which are uncertain for future since the UK's departure from the EU.

The application of that research to tourism and land-based businesses, particularly where previous markets have been impacted by travel restrictions has provided further opportunities for diversification for those businesses which have been disproportionately impacted by Covid.

This is just one example of the breadth of expertise and existing networks across the UHI partnership which is well placed to cover the range of requirements of businesses and with other Colleges and Universities beyond the UHI partnership if there was a suitable funding stream to engage a broader business base.

Other similar areas of expertise within Perth College UHI include Education, Hospitality and Tourism, Healthcare, Childcare, Leadership and Management including the MBA, Aircraft Engineering and Aviation Management, Green Skills in Construction and in Automotive industries, Cyber Security, Computing, Audio Engineering, Music and Music Business, Sports Management and Sports Therapy. With relationships across schools, FE and HE students as well as across all types of businesses, there are multiple opportunities for KE and Innovation which would engage a diverse audience that would be skills and economy led. This would also provide an opportunity for multi-disciplinary engagement that could bring a different perspective to shape businesses thinking to innovation.

Perth College and the UHI's range of teaching provision including in areas like Food, Nutrition and Textiles, as well as TQFE, and staff undertaking research into pedagogy means that adding KE and Innovation into these programmes would enable an onward capacity building across the teaching

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	<p>audiences these programmes serve, including FE lecturers and Home Economics Teachers.</p> <p>In addition, Interface and organisations like Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, would be well placed to identify businesses who would benefit from both College and University involvement in their Innovation and KE project where complementary skills and expertise offered by the College and UHI would be required for the project's success.</p> <p>Within the broader business support ecosystem, Business Gateway, Chambers of Commerce, FSB and the Local Authorities networks would complement College's own business engagement teams to ensure businesses are aware of this support and can enable matching businesses to the most suitable academic partnerships.</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>Co-designing the Entrepreneurial Campus strategy with colleges and universities would be welcome. Colleges undertake enterprise skills within the majority of courses. This provides opportunities for students who may consider taking one of these business ideas forward as their own business beyond their studies.</p> <p>In previous years, Perth College had a well resourced Centre for Enterprise. This was eroded as College funding was by necessity, prioritised towards FT student delivery. This has meant that the capacity of the staff to work with those students to nurture their business ideas and to commercialise technologies and ideas generated is limited. This has meant that engagement with partners within Business Gateway and Elevator Accelerators to refer students to access business creation support is necessary without any direct staff resource.</p> <p>This approach works reasonably well for entrepreneurs with a scalable idea, however for the majority of individuals where those business concepts could be categorised as lifestyle or within the creative industries, they may be unable to access the support required to take these ideas forward.</p> <p>In addition, these services being available on campus directly and where this can be more formally built into their course, with access to incubation facilities on campus, would generate far more ideas</p>

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	<p>and would provide more mechanisms directly delivered by the College to build confidence, support business planning and provide implementation support.</p> <p>Other areas where Colleges can generate high levels of traction in KE and Innovation is within our College School Senior Phase Employer relationships. This would enable the College to build on our existing model of engagement with employers and schools that could be extended to include a more focussed knowledge exchange, innovation, enterprise and associated skillsets.</p>
<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>UHI has a Centre for Entrepreneurship which is based around the Business and Management offering within the university which includes the MBA which is led by Perth College UHI and in collaboration with Inverness and Moray Colleges. This supports the delivery of enterprise skills within not only the business focussed programmes but also within other courses.</p> <p>Perth College also leads a range of programmes from introductory to degree level in Art and Design, Audio Engineering, Music, Music Business and Sports Therapy. These courses are entrepreneurial focussed where many students establish their own businesses in one of these disciplines.</p> <p>Courses in Engineering, Construction, Automotive, Hair and Beauty have good levels of new business starts which with a greater level of support to focus converting these into commercial ideas would generate a greater number of new starts which would have the potential to become more scalable businesses.</p> <p>Bringing Entrepreneurs into the College to engage and present to students on their experiences works well but the tangible success of these interventions would be much more successful where the College was able to offer a wrap -around service to nurture the business ideas within students.</p> <p>Currently the regional Business Gateway team delivers awareness sessions for our students however they are not resourced to provide that regular support and mentoring service that would be required to increase the engagement and number of new starts which could be generated with a regular focal point on campus.</p>

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<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>Colleges are well placed to reposition the work of the Innovation Centres and through the flexible funding identified as part of this consultation, Colleges will have a greater level of capacity to engage with the Innovation Centres.</p> <p>Innovation Centres should remain part of the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem but not exclusively to be the mechanism to cover elements that Colleges would be best placed to address directly as their reach is not extensive enough and are perceived as exclusive.</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 is an opportunity to include the college sector in planning how best to strengthen Innovation Centres. This could be undertaken through a stronger engagement with/from Interface, to enable equal access to innovation opportunities that would benefit the whole KE and Innovation ecosystem while recognising the strengths that colleges can bring.</p> <p>As part of the SFC coherence review, openness and honesty in discussing how changes to the landscape can best be managed and achieved within a collaboration approach would be welcome. Areas where this engagement can be sustainable and impacting all elements of expertise that Colleges can bring needs that breadth of engagement and a willingness across the system to make this work for a cross sectoral impact.</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>Innovation Centres are generally focussed on supporting the needs of business rather than aligning with college or university agendas. Innovation Centres supporting incubation would be useful for start-ups of scale but not necessarily for the breadth of engagements Colleges have. Also, this service would need to be available across different geographies to be of real direct value to all parts of the education system.</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>Currently there appears to be a lack of parity of engagement and resources devoted between Interface and Colleges compared to a longer established engagement with and funding offered to universities. Discussion with the College sector on how this can work more effectively would be welcome to explore options and how this can be sustained in the context of greater investment for KE and Innovation being made within the College sector as a result of this consultation.</p>

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opportunities for alignment and partnership with Innovation Centres, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, South of Scotland Enterprise and other relevant agencies and organisations.	
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.	Again, with investment for Colleges in KE and Innovation funding, this would provide the scope for a structured engagement where Interface make referrals to Colleges where Colleges have the people resource capacity available to follow these through for the benefit of the business and the regional economy.
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.	The Innovation Voucher scheme requires capacity within the College/ University to invest the time with businesses to develop the concept and draft the funding application. Colleges have been low users of this fund due to staff being already committed to full teaching hours. A College Innovation and KE fund which was flexible would increase Colleges ability to respond to industry needs to benefit from interventions like Innovation Vouchers.
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>Building more flexibility into Innovation Vouchers funding to make these easier to apply for and which would support first time projects as well as follow on interventions with businesses would significantly increase the take up of these by Colleges.</p> <p>A parallel can be drawn with the Flexible Workforce Development Fund where a sustainable investment providing a greater degree of certainty to Colleges in the availability of the funding mechanism rather than a continual application process for small values of funding would increase this activity to be more focussed and expand from introductory KE and Innovation relationships to expanded deeper relationships as the original concept is proven with those engaging businesses.</p> <p>The flexibility and agility of the service and the funding will provide stronger opportunities.</p>

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<p>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?</p>	<p>With the current low volume of Innovation Voucher interventions delivered through Colleges, this would be quite straightforward. As the volume of Innovation Vouchers used by Colleges with businesses increase as a result of interventions outlined in earlier parts of this consultation, these could potentially be reported through an adapted FES reporting mechanism similar to that in place to report FWDF activities.</p> <p>Colleges would welcome a discussion to identify a model which would work for all parties, potentially using the experiences of universities which have typically had much higher volumes of engagements in these vouchers.</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>KE, Innovation and Entrepreneurship has clear links to Colleges within the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), particularly for colleges proactively developing entrepreneurship skills in collaboration with SFC and universities. This will of course require the necessary investment mechanisms to achieve the high-level aims of Scottish Government and the mission-led requirements of resource utilisation and investment included within this consultation on KE and Innovation funding policies. Colleges and universities individually and collectively deliver large-scale interventions supporting future economic and business needs in a way that reflects each sectors expertise, networks, specialisms and broader relationships. This would align with both the National Improvement Framework and the National Performance Framework.</p> <p>While colleges are not currently acknowledged in the context of research pooling and collaboration, the UHI Colleges do have strong levels of expertise in these areas as delivery partners cover the breadth of tertiary provision.</p> <p>In addition, work ongoing within the College Development Network (CDN) in development of research expertise that exists within the College sector provides the opportunity to actively address the aims of SFC and university colleagues with both research and K E & I.</p> <p>Colleges also have relationships with Colleges and Universities internationally including from within high innovation economies such as Finland and China. Engagements with those partners on their KE and Innovation systems may be valuable for the next phase of this consultation and if this was of</p>

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	<p>interest, Perth College UHI would be happy to engage our partners in an international comparison of approaches that may help to inform the Scottish approach.</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>Through this consultation, there is the opportunity to genuinely review the skills landscape and economic priorities linked to the National Improvement Framework and the National Performance Framework. Colleges' role in bringing its influential place within the skills delivery landscape across SFC and SDS would be valuable and would widen the participation across all target audiences for these interventions.</p> <p>This would bring the College's expertise in supporting both SFC-led efforts in funded KE and Innovation activity and SDS skills provision which should include those broader Innovation and Entrepreneurship elements within many skills-based interventions. This would broaden the scope, depth and catchment of employers and industry involved in this activity, particularly within the range of apprenticeships, including Foundation Apprenticeships. Including that target audience at the outset within their workplace engagements would increase entrepreneurial and innovative thinking as part of their career planning process.</p> <p>In this way, the college sector would have greater opportunity to maximise and utilise funding models linked to KE and Innovation activity. This would provide greater scope to measure the impact and outcomes of K E & I activities which would support SFC to achieve its intended aims.</p>
<p>We may publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses 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.</p>	<p>Publish information and excerpts from this survey response INCLUDING the organisation name.</p>

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