



SFC survey on University Innovation Fund approach

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

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

A single institutional submission is requested.

Response form

Institution: University of Dundee

Contact name: Margaret Teven (Head of Research Impact & Culture)

Contact details: m.k.teven@dundee.ac.uk 01382 384426

Purpose

Please describe what your institution considers UIF to be for and how widely this is understood.

The University of Dundee utilises the annual UIF allocation to underpin, invest, and build capacity and expertise in the University's innovation and knowledge exchange ecosystem. Identified leads for each of the 7 national outcomes are now in place, allowing for more in-depth engagement with the collaboration opportunities that exist across the Scottish HE landscape.

Please describe how your institution ensures UIF is targeted at delivering the published UIF outcomes.

The fund is managed by the Vice Principal Research and Knowledge Exchange in partnership with the University's Strategic planning team and Research and Innovation Services. Project updates, progress and reporting is centralised to ensure innovation and knowledge exchange activities are aligned to the academic schools' ambitions and the University's transformation agenda.

Management and Planning

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

Impact and innovation lies at the heart of the University Strategy. Our mission is to 'Transform lives, locally and globally, through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge'. This means that the creation (research) and sharing (teaching) of knowledge is directly linked to impact and innovation (transforming lives). The UIF supports and enables this approach by providing additional focus to our schools, who build plans to deliver impactful activity. This 'bottom-up' approach leads to a much greater sense of ownership and responsibility in our academic schools and contributes to innovation being embedded in our culture.

One of the challenges with single year allocations from SFC is that partnerships with SMEs, larger industrial partners, third sector organisations and other sectors often are fostered over a longer time-frame. Certainty over a longer timeframe may be of benefit to institutions and allow for more longitudinal evidence for SFC to use to demonstrate impact from this funding.

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

UIF is allocated to each of our academic schools and to our Research and Innovation Services Department to support this activity. Research and Innovation Services stimulate and coordinate this activity across our academic schools and bring together evidence to use for reporting purposes.

Collaboration

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

This fund is a dedicated resource allocated to academic schools to focus on Knowledge Exchange, commercialisation and innovation initiatives and projects. Reporting against 7 national outcomes allows a framework to engage with and ensure efforts are focused, prioritised and outcome based.

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

To ensure suitability, the University supports the continuation of the UIF Manager position. This post has been central to the developments and collaborations to date. Without a dedicated resource it may prove challenging to co-ordinate efforts across the Sector and keep UIF at the forefront of stakeholders minds.

Case study

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

Entrepreneurialism at the University of Dundee

The University of Dundee is committed to embedding enterprise and entrepreneurship

throughout its research and educational programmes, and UIF has underpinned this ambition, both through crucial funding and by facilitating an invaluable network of peer institutions.

The Directorate of Research and Innovation Services (RIS) works in partnership with the academic community in Dundee to professionally support the development of transformational research and maximise the impact it has upon lives, societies, and economies, locally and globally.

We have over 20 active spin-out companies that have stemmed from innovative research at the University, and these companies continue to benefit from expertise within RIS, including: protecting and exploiting IP assets; preparing legal agreements and leading in negotiations; and facilitating financing opportunities with Venture Capitalists and other investors.

Examples of recent successes of our spin-outs:

- *MyWay Digital Health* provides a digital platform to help people with diabetes self-manage their condition, improving quality of life and reducing health complications. Since incorporation in early 2017, the company have won several prestigious awards, including securing an £80k investment from Scottish EDGE in 2017, and CEO Dr Debbie Wake received a notable £50k Innovate UK Women in Innovation award in March of this year. The company are raising £5m to scale their platform globally, with £2m commitment from the Scottish Investment Bank, and they currently employing 23 people in Dundee and Edinburgh.
- *Platinum Informatics* provides software and consulting services for data and workflow management for data analysis and visualisation in laboratory environments. Formed in 2018, the company were finalists in the influential Converge Challenge, and received £100k from Scottish EDGE that same year.
- *Exscientia* is at the forefront of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven drug discovery and design. Formed in 2012, the company were the first to automate drug design, surpassing conventional approaches. The company has formed strategic alliances and secured significant investment from a number of pharmaceutical giants, including GSK and Sanofi.

The Centre of Entrepreneurship (CoE) at the University was established in 2017 to support a diverse portfolio of staff and student enterprise initiatives. The centre hosts one of Elevator's three Accelerator programmes, assisting ambitious, early-stage businesses to improve their growth and investment potential. In addition, a strategic alliance with Entrepreneurial Scotland provides access to a global network of business contacts, along with training and support for our on-campus community.

Testimony to the overall culture of enterprise within the University community, Entrepreneurship Week is a new staple in the University's calendar, which culminates in the Venture Competition – a £27k new business idea competition for University of Dundee Students, Staff and Recent Graduates, with 8 prize fund categories.

To build on this positive culture and to prioritise the development of our current spin-out pipeline, we have appointed a Company Creation Consultant. The new post strengthens the partnership between RIS and CoE. With this dedicated resource, we are able to advance more early-stage opportunities and help to ensure prospects are investor-ready, providing a unique support to spin-outs and start-ups from the University community.

Thank you for completing this survey.