

Priority 4 Effective knowledge exchange and innovation including excellent collaboration between universities and industry

Context

49. Our three pillars of activity which frame our industry engagement are:

I. Talent, Skills and Employability

Through this pillar, we constantly ensure that our degree programmes remain current and support student employability, and in order to achieve this we seek employers' input to course content and degree programme and delivery. We also aim to provide meaningful work-related learning for students, including placements with companies, industry co-sponsorship of doctoral degrees, and paid internships. We aim to ensure that our graduates are equipped with the abilities and commercial skills that employers need, through digital and data-related learning opportunities. We also offer the opportunity for our staff to move between the University and companies, and encouraging innovative partnerships.

II. Research and Development

Through our Research and Development pillar, our aim is to ensure that our research can reach a broad range of beneficiaries, including industry which will allow a better mutual understanding of the practical applications of our research. We aim to make our academic expertise more available to industry through better online information about our research specialities. We also employ entrepreneurs-in-residence with expertise in specialist areas.

III. Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Through our Innovation and Entrepreneurship pillar, we have the underlying aims of creating opportunities for engagement executives to learn from industry, including learning about routes to market. We support pathways to strategic relationships, from single transactional relationships through to integrated partnerships, as well as focussing on income from our high-value intellectual property. We also aim to grow and develop our own venture fund.

University Innovation Fund

50. The University will continue to invest UIF in a broad suite of pan- University commercialisation, knowledge exchange, public engagement and other activities cognisant of the national economic strategy, the SFC priority outcomes and the desire to demonstrate societal and economic impacts transcending skills and innovation. This is being achieved with emphases on collaboration with other HEIs, corporate and public sector partners and especially with national, regional and local government.

51. This is manifest via the [Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal](#). The full spectrum of University capability, facilities and investment are focused on the establishment of the city and wider region as the data capital of Europe unlocking skills and innovation driven growth with local as well as global impacts.

52. This is receiving significant University investment in for example [Edinburgh Futures Institute](#) and the afore-mentioned [Bayes Centre](#) with each coalescing disparate academic excellence

around common but economically and societal themes / challenges. These will in turn deliver demonstrable impacts in student experience, entrepreneurship, new business creation and research and teaching informed by proximity to and long term engagement with employers, funders and citizens.

53. The objective is to align the full intellectual capital of the University with readying the region to capitalise on data focused opportunities in the 21st century, to improve health and well-being as economic growth.

Initiatives include:

- A proposition for a major collaborative centre of excellence on Open Banking, working with local and global partners across financial services, tech sector and government to harness the potential of the open data revolution for inclusive economic growth and societal benefit;
- A major initiative designed to stimulate and facilitate the adoption of data-driven innovation across the creative industries in Edinburgh, including talent, research and entrepreneurship activities.
- An early partnership with the Scottish Government CivTech unit around opportunities for the University to support digital/tech innovation, and the tech SME sector, in addressing major challenges in public service delivery.

54. Additional UIF investment in new resource is enabling the transition from transactional to sustainable long term relationships with key strategic partners. This includes improving the client experience by affording streamlined access to the full spectrum of University intellectual capital and facilities through partner focused and managed relationships.

55. In addition to the local, regional and national impacts, the University will share the experience with partner HEIs using channels such as the Research and Commercial Directors Group (RCDG), as the host of Interface and through the network of Innovation Centres as continuing host of Data Lab.

Outcome one (demand stimulation and PA5): working with Scotland's enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, business networks, Interface, and others, Scottish HEIs will have helped to increase the demand and quality of engagement from businesses and the public sector for University services. And Outcome three (simplification/greater innovation and PA3, PA4 and PA7): in partnership with the EAs and Interface, Scottish HEIs will, at a national level, have made strategic use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond non-STEM).

56. Edinburgh Innovations (EI) is the company with the responsibility for the University's engagement with industry and external partners providing pan University services in support of academic industry engagement. EI will continue to invest UIF and deploy dedicated teams to market and engage directly with external partner and to undertake new campaigns to expand the University's client portfolio.

57. Along with a full suite of interventions to engage with and attract new and increased industry engagement, local and regional traction with business will be enhanced by the investment in and recent recruitment of a cohort of 10 Sector Leaders.

58. Each is aligned with a priority sector of local, regional and national economic importance spanning health, financial, through space and satellites all with an emphasis on Data Driven Innovation (DDI. This includes a partnership with Heriot Watt in robotics.
59. This investment is augmented by the further investment in 40 Chancellors Fellows across the University with each having an objective of stimulating industry informed research and collaboration growth. These are deployed across the University in STEM areas and dedicated to non-STEM areas.
60. The [Edinburgh Futures Institute](#) is a £ multi million investment in new estate and coalescence of capability is a manifestation of this with societal as well as fiscal deliverables and impacts spanning health through social justice.
61. Improved client experience will also be enabled by investment in and allocation of dedicated resource to relationship management with key clients – both public sector and corporate.

Outcome two (simplification/commercialization PA6, PA7 and PA8): in partnership with the Enterprise Agencies (EAs) and Interface, Scottish HEIs as a sector will have demonstrably simplified business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish Universities

and,

Outcome three (simplification / greater innovation): in partnership with the EAs and Interface, Scottish HEIs will, at a national level, have made strategic use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond non-STEM).

62. EI will continue to engage fully with the Enterprise Agencies and other Scottish HEIs and, through the City Region Deal with national, regional and local government managed through City and Region Deal Project Board.
63. Touchpoints will include continuation of the University's close and positive engagement with the High Growth Start Up and SMART Scotland teams in Scottish Enterprise at complement our increasing investment in entrepreneurship and drive to grow the volume and investment raised by student and staff start-up companies as a priority commercialisation vehicle for academic output.
64. The University will continue to allocate dedicated resource to management of referrals from Interface and to work with Interface to continually improve this service to the SME base.
65. The relationship with Interface will be enhanced with the co-location in Murchison House to ensure closer engagement with the academic base at the University's Kings Building Campus.
66. Impact Accelerator Awards and University matching funds will continue to be invested alongside UIF towards encouraging growth of academic engagement with industry through funded secondments complemented by enabling industry partners to work within the University. The newly opened Bayes Centre as well as purpose built facilities at Kings Buildings campus each accommodate industry partners operating under framework agreements.

Outcome four (entrepreneurialism and PA1 and PA2): Scottish HEIs as a sector will have made a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses.

67. The EI student and staff service improvements includes the establishment of a specialised Enterprise Services (ES) team and recruitment of a new ES Director.
68. This will enable a seamless pan-University entrepreneurial support service to our key student and staff audience groups.
69. Refined intellectual property (IP) management in tandem with the University's formal relationships with Mercia and other investors, the University's Old College Capital (OCC) Fund and the University's continuing support for Engage Invest Exploit annual event will blend with EI specialised entrepreneurial and innovation support services will deliver growth in volume of new companies and funds raised.
70. This includes growth in the number of spin-in companies able to use the expanded incubation facilities, close working with the academic base and streamlined use of high capital cost equipment.
71. UIF support will enable this to be progressed throughout the reporting period.

Outcome five (international and PA11): in partnership with Scottish Development International, Connected Scotland and others, Scottish HEIs will have pooled their knowledge and networks, and shared good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally (operating under Scotland's International Framework).

72. The challenging targets which the University has set for global engagement will continue to benefit from the close working relationship with Scottish Development International (SDI). Edinburgh Global, our Global Academies and EIs own efforts all prosper from this engagement and the University will continue to invest and engage.
73. This commitment is greater following the recent agreement of the City and Region Deal and its emphasis on the ubiquity of Data-driven innovation. The enhanced opportunities to promote Edinburgh as a global destination of choice for organisations and in turn engage with local and regional companies will result in significant economic impact.
74. UIF support will enable the University to drive forward its international engagement and in presenting Scotland and its academic base as an alluring location for international partners with inward investment potential.

Outcome six (inclusive growth and social impact and PA11): Building on current and good practice Scottish HEIs will have scaled up their support of the Scottish Government's ambitions for inclusive growth.

75. The University's Strategic Plan (2016) commits the University to building and strengthening relationships and information exchange between the University, the city and our communities. The University's Community Engagement Strategy builds on the Strategic Plan's development theme of 'Contributing locally', identifying three key areas in which the University will make a positive contribution to the city:

- Developing, harnessing and strengthening relationships
 - Working with communities through research, learning and teaching
 - Raising awareness and understanding between the University and the community
76. The University's significant investment in the City and Regional Deal alongside the Edinburgh Futures Institute will enable growing engagement with the public in research, and working with civic and community partners to enhance health and well-being, education, culture and quality of life. The University's Community Engagement Strategy will support the inclusive growth element of the Deal. Indeed, the Strategy is being updated to take into account the City Deal context recently approved.
77. The University has now twice made the Scottish Government's Social Impact Pledges, meeting all of its pledges in year one and being on track to meet them for year two; the University was one of the first HEIs to sign up to the Pledge. The University's current Pledges are to:
- Supporting digital inclusion
 - Supporting social enterprise
 - Helping homeless people
78. The University will use the UIF to strengthen its commitment to supporting collaboration with the other Edinburgh HEIs in Public Engagement with Research through a refreshed collaborative framework for the Beltane Public Engagement Network. Through the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Innovation Strands, the Beltane partnership will help support innovation through public engagement with University research. The University approved its first [Strategy to Support Public Engagement with Research](#) in March 2018, and has resourced a central team to coordinate its implementation.

Outcome seven (equality and diversity PA10): Building on current and good practice HEIs will have ensured positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF.

79. The University has revised approach and commitments to equality and diversity -see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/strategy-action-plan> and related initiatives. The Strategic Plan also outlines our commitment to 'maintain a fair, inclusive and diverse community of students and staff, enriching the learning, working and social experience of all and demonstrating our commitment to social justice.'
80. The University of Edinburgh continues its commitment to engage fully with Scottish business and public sectors to ensure that the full breadth and depth of the institutional academic capital makes a leading contribution to economic development and public service provision. This commitment spans major investment in the University estate and new resource with objectives of externally led research and informed education aligned with national and international employer requirements improving student experience and employability.
81. The University is also innovating internally in promoting streamlined business access to the University by adoption of common contracts and use of refined internal processes to accelerate and improve the business and academic client experience.

82. This approach is accompanied by internal investment to stimulate participation in innovation led activities via professional support, incentivisation to grow impact and to continue the year of year growth in each category evidenced in returns to SFC. This includes an institution-wide aspiration to support growth in entrepreneurship and new company creation with opportunities available to across the University community.
83. The University is committed to making the promotion of the University internationally in sectors aligned with Scotland's economic priorities leading to inward investment and export growth. This spans aerospace to agriculture, health, environment, justice and security. Of critical importance is the ubiquity of data driven innovation in all sectors especially finance, manufacturing and healthcare, especially relevant to an ageing population.