

# Universities Innovation Fund

## ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE OF SCOTLAND

December 2017 (with September 2018 update appended)

### INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland warmly welcomed the Universities Innovation Fund (UIF) initiative and the wider aim of achieving a step change in Scotland's performance in innovation and knowledge exchange. With nearly 18 months of activity behind us and significant plans afoot for the remainder of 17/18, the Conservatoire has been able to maximise the early stage impact of this funding, strengthening our existing collaborative relationships and building new ones while developing innovation and knowledge exchange capacity and expertise within the institution.

The value of the Creative Industries sector in the UK has continued to grow, and the latest figures published at the end of November 2017 show that the creative industries grew at twice the rate of the wider economy in 2015-2016. The sector is now worth £91.8bn in GVA to the UK – more than the automotive, life sciences, aerospace and oil and gas industries combined. It grew by 7.6% over the 2015-2016 period, compared to a 3.5% rate of growth for the economy as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

As Scotland's national conservatoire, the Royal Conservatoire is, therefore, uniquely positioned to lead innovation and knowledge exchange in areas that are rich with growth potential. Innovation, impact and engagement are fundamental to the Conservatoire's ethos, embedded within learning and teaching across all our art forms, and integral to our research practices.

The Universities Innovation Fund helps us to make a significant difference to the innovation trajectories of our students and staff, supporting them to realise the full potential of their projects and ideas in practical terms. While creating innovative work has always been a priority for the Conservatoire as a community of artists and scholars, we can now take that further and support them with a range of innovative new platforms for engagement, R&D capacity, and new business models.

We noted last year that the investment of the UIF has increased our operational effectiveness in supporting innovation, and our ability to pursue strategic initiatives across and beyond the Conservatoire. We think we are now seeing the step-change that the UIF was designed to create and our ambitions have grown accordingly.

### PROPOSED USE OF THE UIF IN SUMMARY

In 2018 - 2019, the Conservatoire will use the UIF in support of two broad initiatives:

- 1) To continue and extend existing work, and pursue new strategic actions, to provide **enhanced innovation support** for staff, students and graduates and our partnership potential.
- 2) To work in partnership with other HEIs to make an effective **contribution to the agreed Strategic Outcomes** commensurate with our scale and expertise and building on the work of the first two years of UIF.

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<sup>1</sup> Data from the Creative Industries Federation

## ENHANCING OUR INNOVATION SUPPORT

As noted in previous year, the Conservatoire's central KE team is small and has diverse responsibilities. On the basis of UIF investment we have significantly extended our skills and knowledge base with the appointment of a KE Manager, who has now been in post for 12 months: this has greatly improved our operational effectiveness. The core team comprises:

- Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange (Grade 10, FT)
- Knowledge Exchange Manager (Grade 7, 0.8 FTE)
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Officer (Grade 5, 0.6 FTE)
- Research and Knowledge Exchange Administrator (Grade 4, 0.6 FTE)

In addition to sustaining our staff incentives and existing strategic KE projects, we will build on the outcomes of UIF-funded work to date, which includes a range of pilot projects.

Specifically, we will follow up the scoping project which will go out to tender in early 2018. This project will explore the potential for a performing arts Innovation Exchange resource at the Royal Conservatoire's Renfrew Street campus. We know anecdotally of the importance of our campus as a meeting place that facilitates innovative work and we believe there may be scope for a specific space and support service structure that would be shared by these professional artists, our dedicated research staff (academic and support), doctoral students and, crucially, recent graduates. The scoping project will explore demand, potential parameters of, and partners for, such a resource, and it is our ambition to establish the Innovation Exchange as a centre of excellence for innovation in the performing and production arts.

We will commence the development of this resource in 18/19. While we have ideas around possible structures and content for this from pilot projects undertaken so far, we will wait for the report and recommendations before committing to a definite shape and form. Nonetheless, we expect that the services provided will include:

### *Supplementary support for entrepreneurial education: Make It Happen Month*

The work on entrepreneurial education that we have undertaken at the Conservatoire indicates that this is well embedded in our programmes, which are comprehensively integrated with the professions to which they relate.<sup>2</sup> To further support the entrepreneurial skills of our students and graduates, and following a pilot in November 2017, we plan to designate November as *Make It Happen* month across the Conservatoire (timed to include and link into Global Entrepreneurship Week). This will take shape as a series of extra-curricular networking events, workshops and panel sessions all focused on how to get your ideas and projects off the ground as emerging creative entrepreneurs. Sessions will cover crowdfunding, writing funding applications, finding investors as well as creating innovative marketing campaigns, and hearing from successful role models on how they have dealt with significant challenges through innovative solutions. Our *Make it Happen* pilot was a joint initiative with the Student Union rooted in student context and experience and we expect to sustain this approach in future years.

The aim is to offer inspiration, insights and practical workshops to support the ambitions of our enterprising students and enhance their entrepreneurial education here at RCS.

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<sup>2</sup> See ed. Keogh, *Movers and Shakers: Developing Enterprising Artists, Makers and Technicians* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, 2017).

### *Micro Funding for graduate entrepreneurs*

Based on approaches piloted in 17-18, we intend to establish a new initiative that will make available small sums of money to Royal Conservatoire graduates to help them in getting their projects up and running, or to pursue further training or attendance at industry conferences. Experience indicates that small sums of money, distributed without burdensome bureaucracy, can facilitate significant transformation, enabling artists and creative entrepreneurs to get innovative projects and new businesses off the ground. A small amount of investment can significantly alter an artist's trajectory – with additional benefits including leveraging other funds, increased levels of confidence, and business growth. We anticipate that this as-yet untitled micro funding initiative will be available to Conservatoire graduates up to 3 years, with twice yearly calls for applications. The selection processes and criteria are being developed by the KE Manager in AY 17-18, in consultation with programme leaders and the Research and KE Committee.

### *Creative Producer/Creative Entrepreneur support packages –*

We are currently working in partnership with Cultural Enterprise Office (CEO) to pilot a bespoke programme based on their package 'Design Your Practice'. We will look to extend this pilot by providing a small number of support packages in AY18-19 for exceptional students who wish to develop their skills as Creative Producers. Work with our students, supported by the UIF in AY 17-18, indicates that they identify more readily with the language of creative production than with the jargon of entrepreneurship, and this reframing provides a vehicle for students to think innovatively about the work that they intend to produce. These packages will include support with fundraising, managing IP and the issues around touring and live performance, and will be delivered, where possible, with industry partners and existing service providers such as the CEO.

### *Exchange Keys*

Building on our work to expand the scope of our public engagement, and based on an ongoing pilot in 17-18, which has already delivered one successful event, we will curate a series of three to four high-profile public talks across the academic year, connecting significant ideas in the wider contemporary world to the working lives of artists and creative entrepreneurs. The talks will look at disruptive innovation, new business models, the circular economy and global movements and will be tailored to a mixed audience of academics, students, the public and professional artists. Each talk will be filmed and available to the public through the RCS Exchange Portal.

## **2. CONTRIBUTING TO STRATEGIC OUTCOMES**

The Royal Conservatoire is working to make a clear contribution to the agreed Strategic Outcomes (SOs), commensurate with our scale and expertise

Along with representatives from the other HEIs we commenced early stage discussion, development and planning work in 17/18 in order to make progress towards these outcomes.

Some of the Conservatoire's contributions will be made in partnership, either with individual institutions or consortia, or through working more effectively with agencies and groups such as Interface or the Universities Scotland Research and Commercialisation Directors Group (RCDG); others will require specific work within the Conservatoire. RCS has committed to full participation in two of the Outcome Steering Groups and we look forward to collaborating with our HEI partners in 2018/2019

They are; Outcome 3 – Greater Innovation and Outcome 6 – Inclusive Growth and Social Impact.

In 2017/18 we will make initial progress against Outcomes 3 and 6, in a partnership pilot project with Glasgow School of Art and the University of the Arts London (UAL). We will run a pilot three institution enterprise skills summer school – MODUAL which was developed by UAL. MODUAL is a cross disciplinary collaboration and idea generation workshop programme, with a core theme of creating positive change. This programme has already been delivered in London, New York and Mumbai. In Summer 2018 it will be delivered in Scotland for the first time, as a two week innovation and collaboration summer school between Glasgow and London, with the possibility of a third city joining in the coming months. The aim is to equip the students with the tools to bridge the gap between university and the creative industry. The pilot will commence in July 2018 and GSA and RCS will then open this up to broader learning and participation with other institutions in 2019.

In addition to our involvement with Outcomes 3 and 6 we are committed to playing our part in the development of each of the seven outcome areas. We have outlined in more detail in the table below how we intend to do this

Outcome	Analysis of practice & identification of best practice	Devise & execute programme	Develop/initiate sector-wide programme
<p><b>Outcome one (demand stimulation):</b> 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.</p>	<p>RCS wishes to establish closer working links with INTERFACE, in order to increase the demand for Innovation Vouchers from RCS and collaborators.</p>	<p>Work with INTERFACE and other partners in order to drive a bigger pipeline of Creative Industries projects to apply for Interface vouchers.</p>	
<p><b>Outcome two (simplification/commercialisation)</b> : 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.</p>	<p>RCS will support simplification processes through the use of the shared contracts portal.</p>	<p>RCS is working to establish a shop window for KE and would aim to learn from institutional partners in terms of developing an effective infrastructure and KE model. The RCS KE Manager has joined a UK KE Managers forum exploring how to develop the most effective KE strategies from an Arts and Humanities perspective.</p>	
<p><b>Outcome three (simplification/greater innovation):</b> in partnership with the EAs and Interface, Scottish HEIs</p>	<p>RCS will promote the micro interactions, networks of individuals that lead</p>	<p>Through data extracted from the PURE portal we will be able to demonstrate the</p>	

will, at a national level, have made strategic use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond non-STEM).	to connections and collaborations within and beyond RCS and which ultimately drive innovation in the sector as well as being a vital pipeline to a start up culture.	connections, learning journeys and interactions which are key to success – economic, social and cultural. Co deliver pilot projects with HEI partners.	
<b>Outcome four (entrepreneurialism):</b> 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.	RCS are currently pulling together a report on how Entrepreneurialism is delivered within core curriculum and outwith. This will inform the approach we take to develop and further embed this area of our work.		
<b>Outcome five (international):</b> 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).	RCS will seek to develop a direct relationship between KE and SDI and learn from the approaches taken by partners.	RCS has engaged with the Creative Industries Advisory Group and seeks to gain insights on current barriers to internationalisation for creative industries practitioners and businesses, in order to address these within our supplementary programme offers.	
<b>Outcome six (inclusive growth and social impact):</b> Building on current and good practice Scottish HEIs will have scaled up their support of the Scottish Government’s ambitions for inclusive growth.	RCS has offered to share our extensive practice in public engagement to our colleagues in RCDG in order to support colleagues’ progress in this areas.	Potential workshop delivered at RCS.	
<b>Outcome seven (equality and diversity):</b> 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.	RCS could share practice through the development of our BSL programme, and training to support students with ASD.		

## MATCH FUNDING

The Royal Conservatoire is not in a position to provide match funding in cash terms. However, as noted in 2016, the Conservatoire invests considerable resources in professional teams devoted to effective public and cultural engagement – these teams were not funded by UIF in 2016-17 (or by its predecessor, the KTG), and so their staff costs in 2015-16 offer indicative match funding in kind for the UIF, as follows:

Team	Staff costs*
<b>Artistic Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsible for management of all aspects of the Conservatoire's performance programmes and other public engagement.</li> </ul>	£137,277
<b>Front of House and Box Office</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public-facing staff supporting performance programmes and public engagement</li> </ul>	£297,602
<b>Lifelong Learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses for adults and young people (staff related to SFC-funded T20/40 initiative are not included, nor are Junior Conservatoire staff)</li> </ul>	£306,045
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£740,924</b>
*Including superannuation and NI. Staff in these teams with a student-facing remit have been omitted	

### UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2018: UIF ADDITIONAL FUNDING 2018 – 2019

The Royal Conservatoire welcomes the strategic opportunities that increased investment through the University Innovation Fund can leverage in this coming year. Mindful that the additional investment may be time-limited, we are confident that this increase will help to accelerate the plans and activities that we have been developing over the past two years, catalysing strong new alliances; piloting and evidencing new modes of delivery, engagement and support; and deepening the impact of our work with our partners across public, third and industrial sectors. We will work together with our colleagues in other HEIs and industry to address shared strategic challenges that are relevant to our area of expertise and practice

In addition to our original goals for AY2018-19 we will focus on the following seven areas of work.

- Develop our strategic partnership with BBC Scotland, building on our current Memorandum of Understanding to significantly enhance the impact of this unique relationship.
- Develop and implement a pilot project with Interface to test a new approach to Innovation Vouchers that is more effective in the context of the arts and creative industries.
- Develop and implement a pilot project in Business Creation for Creative Disciplines to test drive a sector-specific HEI approach to business creation and professional development in the creative industries sector.
- Appoint a Senior Knowledge Exchange Fellow on a fixed term basis for 12 months to build significantly the scope and capability of our strategic innovation partnerships.
- Invest in low-latency (LOLA) videoconferencing facilities, building on an existing partnership with Edinburgh Napier.
- Work with our HEI colleagues to establish joint approaches to the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), wherever there are possibilities for our areas of expertise.



- Undertake further capacity building and professional development across the Conservatoire's RKE team to ensure successful delivery, implementation and evaluation of our planned work streams.

Below, we give more detail on each proposed strand of work, cross referring each one to the agreed Strategic Outcomes for the UIF.

*A deeper strategic partnership with BBC Scotland (Supporting Outcomes 3, 4, 6 and 7)*

The Conservatoire and BBC Scotland have shared the benefits of joint working through a MoU for a number of years. Both parties agree that there is significant opportunity to build on this unique relationship to create much wider impact. Our existing joint working projects include: regular BBC Radio 3 broadcasts from performances at the Conservatoire; side-by-side professional experiences for our music students with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; significant one-off projects, such *New Dreams* (celebrating Shakespeare's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with GSA and Glasgow University); opportunities for training and development for our Film students on the River City set.

For this time-limited investment, we will focus on piloting new areas for partnership work that offer mutual benefits, which could potentially include: *joint career development and training opportunities; talent development in industry growth areas; an RCS Masterclass Series for broadcast on the new BBC Scotland channel.*

*Test drive a new approach to accessing Innovation Vouchers in partnership with Interface (Supporting Outcomes 2, 3 and 4)*

To further stimulate the creative industries innovation pipeline, and following discussion with Interface, we will pilot an Innovation Voucher scheme in partnership with Interface. We will jointly develop new criteria and success measures for this voucher and will put out a limited call to staff across the Conservatoire to submit applications with SME partners. To mitigate some of the current barriers to the uptake of Innovation Vouchers we will provide funds to the participating SME at 50% value of the voucher (£2,500 per project) to ensure that they can create the capacity to collaborate fully on the project. We will also extend the timescale for delivery of the associated work and look to support projects with innovative practices at their core.

Our aim within the additional UIF investment is to deliver a minimum of 4 projects during AY2018-19 and evaluate the process.

*A collaborative project to pilot HEI Business Creation for creative disciplines (Supporting Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7)*

Building on our partnership with GSA, we will pilot a discipline-specific Business Creation project for students, graduates and researchers. This takes its rationale from SFC's EKOS reports published in January 2018, and follows conversations with Clive Gillman of Creative Scotland on the value of testing specific approaches for the creative industries within HEIs, to enhance business readiness and success. We will also collaborate with Queen Margaret University on aspects of the pilot, and share the learning and evidence gathered through a jointly-curated symposium for our HE and FE colleagues with interest in discipline specific approaches.

*Investment in LOLA (Supporting Outcomes 5, 6, and 7)*

The LOLA low-latency videoconferencing facility is a bespoke combination of software, hardware and high-end peripherals that facilitates real-time synchronous interactions, permitting simultaneous musical interaction – reducing or eliminating the latency that exists in other videoconferencing systems. Live performance places demands on technology that conventional videoconferencing cannot meet. Emerging

low-latency technology such as LOLA makes live simultaneous performance possible for the first time; it is a facilitator of digital interactions in the moment that conventional videoconferencing does not permit. LOLA is a vital tool for artistic and educational collaborations at a distance; it opens up global opportunities for partnerships in performance, research, education and development, and has the potential to shape our understanding of the live arts in the digital age.

Our investment in LOLA builds on an existing partnership with Edinburgh Napier who, among Scottish HEIs, lead on this work. We currently host a PhD student investigating the educational application of LOLA (jointly supervised by a colleague at Napier) and the purchase of this technology will assist in that project as well as permitting us to work with colleagues across Europe and beyond.

#### *Senior Knowledge Exchange Fellow (Supporting Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6)*

We will appoint a Senior Knowledge Exchange Fellow on a 12 month fixed term part-time contract to focus on the development of strategic knowledge exchange projects, bids and partnership development. This additional academic expertise will provide us with an in-house lead developing and scoping joint bids, as well as seeking to take the lead in collaborations where the Conservatoire has expertise. The Fellow will work closely with the KE Manager, and outputs will include new research and KE projects, new collaborations and increased funding levered from other sources.

#### *Joint approach to accessing ISCF with our colleagues across Scottish HEIs (Supporting all Outcomes)*

Subject to sufficient funding support from other participating HEIs, an agreement to co-fund a new Industry Challenge Innovation Manager post to work at a national level across Scottish HEIs forms part of the new UIF collaboration framework led by the RCDG. The Conservatoire will contribute a share of the costs of this post, which will provide additional capacity for coordination to support partnership working across the Scottish partners/agencies (e.g. Scottish Enterprise/HIE/Scottish Government) and with Innovate UK and UKRI: part of the additional UIF funding will be used to co-fund this secondment during AY2018-19 and will provide sector-wide capacity to help build a community of practice focused on ISCF, deliver the Innovation Challenge events, broker new relationships in response to ISCF opportunities and industry led-challenges, act as a central point of contact for Innovate UK and UKRI, and provide support to consortia in emerging challenge areas with potential to influence subsequent waves of ISCF funding.

In addition, we will highlight all relevant opportunities to our networks of partners and alumni to widen the scope for innovation and connection with the ISCF from our sector.

#### *Further capacity building across the Royal Conservatoire's Research and Knowledge Exchange team (Supporting all Outcomes)*

Any increase in activity across the RKE team creates a requirement for a further pulse of capacity-building across our team, resources and infrastructure to ensure that our ambitions are successfully developed, implemented and evaluated. Mindful that the additional investment may be time-limited, we will bring on additional administrative support to the team, extend the scope of our KE Manager and Officer roles, and increase technical and space provision.