



Research  
England

Office for  **OfS**  
RE-P-2020-03-Annex B

# Northumbria University

## HEIF accountability statement

**Narrative return template for HEIF funding period  
2021-22 to 2024-25**

**Return date: 21 May 2021**

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## Question 1 – Strategic objectives

Summarise the institutional strategic objectives that relate to knowledge exchange and guide your plans for HEIF.

We expect institutions' plans for HEIF to be guided by strategic objectives for knowledge exchange. However, there is no requirement for institutions to submit or maintain a standalone knowledge exchange strategy document.

We appreciate that KE objectives may be found in a specific KE strategy document or they may be contained as part of other strategic documents such as teaching, research or overarching institutional strategies.

Whatever form your knowledge exchange objectives are in, please provide a precis of the main objectives here so that we can see the strategic context that guides your plans for HEIF and forms the basis for your monitoring and delivery of intended benefits.

We welcome the inclusion of hyperlinks to published strategies and plans that may be referenced in the summary.

*In answer to this question, you are free to use text or tabular format but please ensure that the question response is contained in no more than two pages of A4.*

*(max 2 pages of A4)*

Northumbria University's Vision for 2030 is to be a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. We are a challenger institution, transforming to take on tomorrow. The University Strategy 2018 – 2023 is the next step on this journey to shape Northumbria's future in a time of increasing competition and globalisation.

With specific regard to Knowledge Exchange, the University's strategy is to deliver a demand led international, national and regional academic offer tailored for different industrial, government, and third sector markets aligned to global challenges, the national Plan for Growth, the regional strategic economic plan and UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), while playing to our academic strengths

In light of this and changing priorities as set out in [RE-P-2020-03](#), Northumbria University sets out here its updated HEIF strategy for the period to 2024-25. This has been developed in light of several change factors including:

1. The new government priorities outlined in RE-P-2020-03 and the Research and Development Roadmap
2. The impact of political, economic and societal changes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit and climate change.
3. Revised national and regional industrial strategies and economic recovery plans and the growing importance of place and levelling mechanisms to enable universities to further contribute to economic growth and social prosperity through Knowledge Exchange.

4. Assurance that HEIF is being used effectively through published evidence on performance achievement – the KEF and the work underway to continuously improve that performance – the Concordat.

The UK Government's new Plan for Growth has explicitly committed to re-balancing regional inequality in terms of prosperity and productivity. Northumbria University works closely with partners including the NE Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), NHS Trusts, other regional Universities and local authorities to understand how best to collaborate and leverage value through relationships with an emphasis on strategic alignment. While good progress has been made, the current and future external environment signals significant future benefit can be gained through further alignment with the North East's Strategic Economic Plan, smart specialisations and sector growth areas as these key areas very much align with our institutional expertise and specialisms.

Recent UK Government announcements have:

- stressed the importance of building back better, the place, skills and levelling-up agendas and of a green, infrastructure-led recovery with specific mention of the potential of the North East in relation to carbon capture and offshore energy.
- confirmed the vital role of universities in the country's recovery and talked about how additional government investment in R&I (the 2.4% target) will leverage in additional investment from the private sector and inward investment from overseas.

Northumbria University's knowledge exchange strategy sets out a clear pledge to grow and drive its impact on the world through our ambition for ever higher quality research, innovation and other enterprise activity. This is done through collaboration with key stakeholders and to address global, national and regional economic and social priorities. Stakeholders include the organisations listed above as well as business, industry and the wider community through membership organisations such as the CBI, NE Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses and Small Business Charter as well as with voluntary organisations, sporting and cultural institutions.

Northumbria is working closely with Newcastle University and other partners in the city to deliver on this strategic ambition through a Civic University Agreement and pro-active membership of the multi-partner City Futures Board and Growth & Prosperity Groups. These partners include the NE Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), NHS Trusts, councils, business, industry, culture, sport and the wider community.

We are seeking to align to strategy priority sectors, the North East's LEP Strategic Economic Plan and their future economy priority sectors, in particular:

1. Health, Pharma and Life Sciences
2. Green Energy and Climate Change
3. Digital (including Digital Construction)
4. Advanced Manufacturing
5. Creative and Cultural Industries

These align with our institutional strengths as evidenced by our Multi-Disciplinary Research Themes (MDRTs):

1. Integrated Health and Social Care (includes Healthy Ageing & Vitality)
2. Human and Digital Design
3. Energy Futures
4. Extreme Environments
5. Global Development Future

## 6. BioDesign for the Bioeconomy

This will be delivered through a comprehensive Knowledge Exchange strategy encompassing user-led research and innovation, a stronger focus on Intellectual Property commercialisation and spin-out, education, skills and professional development, employability, graduate retention, enterprise, and entrepreneurship.

Therefore, our new HEIF Strategy for the next period seeks to build on the opportunities set out here and planned through the following principles and objectives:

1. Develop a closer alignment and application of our **R&I** expertise and new knowledge to better contribute to the city and wider **regional strategic priorities**.
2. Work more closely with industry and partners on “demand” led collaborative and contract research to contribute directly to **sector growth**.
3. Graduate students (UG & PGT) and researchers (PhD) to build long-term strengths and knowledge assets of particular relevance to the region.
4. Co-leading and delivering a culture of professional engagement and working with regional stakeholders so that we become identified as an organisation which it is easy to do business with.
5. The University is recognised as focussed on Innovation and Entrepreneurship through creative leadership across multiple disciplinary areas in core Industry sectors.
6. Our CPD programmes are a mechanism to test out new knowledge and methods with ‘senior leaders to effect change in tomorrow’s organisations’ as part of our continuing research programme, which in turn will contribute to future publications, impact, and other research assets

We will continue to strengthen our national and international focus through key strategic partnerships including in China and the Netherlands, particularly through the new International Centre for Connected Construction (IC3), led by Northumbria University.

Northumbria’s submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 was its largest ever and – subject to the outcome – should see a step change in our reputation and research impact. Northumbria submitted 1096 staff across thirteen Units of Assessment (UoA) reflecting research across four Faculties and nineteen Departments, incorporating traditional disciplines, such as English and Engineering, modern disciplines, such as Business and Design, and professional disciplines, such as Architecture and Nursing. We will build on this increased breadth and depth of research with collaborative research at the core of this. The focus now is on driving up income and investment and we will use the HEIF income to do this.

This work is embedded in the University Strategy within the KE-related Business Outcomes. Collectively, these strategic objectives provide the framework through which the University drives institutional change to further support and grow KE activities. Each business outcome is linked directly at a strategic level to the KEF concordat principles and therefore cascades those principles through to operational activity. These focus on high quality academic activity which is facilitated and underpinned by fundamental business process and procedures such as strategic account management, sales and business development. The University has a clearly documented and implemented ‘customer’ acquisition methodology (internal and external), opportunity due diligence process and pricing strategies which are informed by up-to-date market intelligence. Collectively, these activities are captured in the client relationship management system which all staff can access and houses in excess of 400 live company connections.

## Question 2 – Use of HEIF

### How do you intend to use your 2021-22 to 24-25 HEIF allocations?

As detailed in [RE-CL-2020-04](#) and RE-P-2020-03., in order to enable institutions to effectively respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, we will use the 2019-20 HEIF Annual Monitoring Statement submitted in February 2021 to gather information about the use of HEIF during 2020-21,

In this accountability statement return we would like to know about your plans for HEIF for the remainder of the funding period 2021-22 to 2024-25. Please include indication of the planned timescale of the activity e.g. 2021-22 only; ongoing or 2022-23 onwards.

Please use the response layout grid provided overleaf, to provide the following information:

- a) Describe the key activities supported by your HEIF allocation.
- b) Include specific reference to how you expect HEIF to support these activities – i.e. specific expenditures: funded posts, academic staff buy out, internal competitive projects; and the proportion of the activity that is supported by HEIF (e.g. x1 business development post 50% HEIF funded).
- c) How these activities relate to the government priorities and RE-OfS strategic objectives outlined in paragraphs 9 and 10 of RE-P-2020-03. Where student benefits are achieved, please include an indication of the number of students benefiting.
- d) Which strategic KE objective, as outlined in question 1, does each activity relate to.
- e) Indication of the timescale for each activity (e.g. 2021-22 only, ongoing or to be confirmed)

*In answer to this question, please use the response grid provided and ensure that the entire question response is contained in no more than six pages of A4 or A3.*

**Question 2: Use of HEIF**

(Max 6 pages of A4 or A3)

<p><b>Planned areas of HEIF supported KE activity</b></p> <p>Please provide an overview of planned KE activities or projects that will be supported by your 2021-22 and onwards HEIF allocations.</p>	<p><b>HEIF support</b></p> <p>How HEIF will be used to support the project?</p>	<p><b>HEIF priorities</b></p> <p>How does this relate to govt priorities and RE-OfS strategic objectives? (Including note of scale where student benefits are achieved.)</p>	<p><b>Strategic objectives</b></p> <p>Which institutional strategic KE objective does this relate to?</p>	<p><b>Indication of timescales</b></p>
<p><b>BDM Staff Time</b></p> <p>This HEIF-funded BDM staffing resource has a focus on developing and managing relationships with external partners, businesses, public and third sector clients which generate and secure collaborative and contract research, consultancy, continuing professional development (CPD), degree/higher apprenticeships, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), the hiring out of facilities and equipment and other business and entrepreneurial activities. They contribute to and support the achievement of the University's Knowledge Exchange (KE) activities and targets and identify and develop new opportunities for the growth of KE activities within the University that contribute to income generation, external collaboration, and impact.</p>	<p>Salary costs for 3 FTEs Business Development Managers</p>	<p>Supporting the Government's Plan for Growth re-balancing regional inequality in terms of prosperity and productivity</p> <p>Supporting the ambition to achieve 2.4% of GDP invested in GDP</p> <p>Supporting companies and organisations to grow and become more productive and highly skilled.</p>	<p>Deliver a focused KE portfolio based on demand and quality</p>	<p>2021-22 onwards</p>
<p>Business Development activity support</p>	<p>Non-staff costs to support the BDM/KE staff activity (e.g. travel, equipment, events, marketing to develop our KE activity). Approximately £10,000 p.a.</p>	<p>Supporting the Government's Plan for Growth re-balancing regional inequality in terms of prosperity and productivity</p> <p>Supporting the ambition to achieve 2.4% of GDP invested in GDP</p>	<p>Deliver a focused KE portfolio based on demand and quality</p>	<p>2021-22 onwards</p>

<b>Planned areas of HEIF supported KE activity</b> Please provide an overview of planned KE activities or projects that will be supported by your 2021-22 and onwards HEIF allocations.	<b>HEIF support</b> How HEIF will be used to support the project?	<b>HEIF priorities</b> How does this relate to govt priorities and RE-OfS strategic objectives? (Including note of scale where student benefits are achieved.)	<b>Strategic objectives</b> Which institutional strategic KE objective does this relate to?	<b>Indication of timescales</b>
		Supporting companies and organisations to grow and become more productive and highly skilled.		
Academic Leaders of KE (Directors of Research & Knowledge Exchange)	20% of salary costs of Director of R&KE within each academic department within the university	Supporting the Government's Plan for Growth re-balancing regional inequality in terms of prosperity and productivity  Supporting the ambition to achieve 2.4% of GDP invested in GDP  Supporting companies and organisations to grow and become more productive and highly skilled.	Deliver a focused KE portfolio based on demand and quality	2021-22 onwards
Graduate Futures colleagues	25% of costs of key members of staff to support student and graduate employability and enterprise.	Supporting graduates to enter successful careers and / or to set up their own companies / become self-employed.	Holistic Support to Improve Student Employability	2021-22 onwards

<b>Planned areas of HEIF supported KE activity</b> Please provide an overview of planned KE activities or projects that will be supported by your 2021-22 and onwards HEIF allocations.	<b>HEIF support</b> How HEIF will be used to support the project?	<b>HEIF priorities</b> How does this relate to govt priorities and RE-OfS strategic objectives? (Including note of scale where student benefits are achieved.)	<b>Strategic objectives</b> Which institutional strategic KE objective does this relate to?	<b>Indication of timescales</b>
IP & Commercialisation Staff	Salary costs for IP & Commercialisation Manager	To support innovation, spin out and commercialisation (R&D Roadmap)	Grow our Capacity for IP Commercialisation and Spin Outs	2021-22 onwards
IP & Commercialisation non-staff	To cover costs related to IP and commercialisation activity – travel, equipment, events, marketing etc	To support innovation, spin out and commercialisation (R&D Roadmap)	Grow our Capacity for IP Commercialisation and Spin Outs	2021-22 onwards
We will undertake an annual review and have built in some flexibility to support future activity not yet known given that this is a 4-year strategy and HEIF will enable us respond to changing contexts as set out above.	Academic staff time (salary costs) and non-staff costs – seed funding key emerging programmes and projects – these could include support for digital construction R&D, Nutran nutrition research, Sleep research lab, collaborative PhDs, NE Policy and Evidence Hub	Supporting the Government’s Plan for Growth re-balancing regional inequality in terms of prosperity and productivity  Supporting the ambition to achieve 2.4% of GDP invested in GDP.  Supporting companies and organisations to grow and become more productive and highly skilled.	Deliver a focused KE portfolio based on demand and quality	2021-22 onwards



### Question 3 – Monitoring success

How do you manage your HEIF funding and monitor the success of your activities against the strategic objectives set out in question 1, and in line with delivering Government priorities?

Describe the policies, procedures and approach you have in place in the context of your strategic objectives to:

- i. manage your HEIF spending
- ii. measure progress
- iii. evaluate outcomes and
- iv. identify lessons learned.

*In answer to this question, you are free to use text or tabular format but please ensure that the entire question response is contained in no more than four pages of A4.*

*(Max 4 pages of A4)*

Describe policies, procedures and approach to:

- i. manage your HEIF spending

Management Accounts colleagues will regularly review how HEIF is being utilised/progressing against the agreed targets. Any variances or issues will be discussed, and plans will be set in place to resolve these issues. Information will be provided by the relevant managers. All expenditure will be tightly monitored to ensure costs remain within the agreed budget and are spent in line with the University's Financial Regulations. This information will also be used to form the Annual Monitoring Statement to accurately report the expenditure against the relevant categories.

- ii. measure progress
- iii. evaluate outcomes and
- iv. identify lessons learned.

**Monitoring, measuring, evaluation of and learning from HEIF is overseen by the Northumbria University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee** which is a Committee of Academic Board. The purpose of the Committee is to oversee the governance and contribute to the driving and monitoring strategic performance for the University's research, innovation and knowledge exchange and enterprise activities.

The specific duties are as follows:

#### **Strategy**

- i. To provide strategic direction to the delivery of the University Strategy 2018/23 objectives about research, innovation, knowledge exchange and enterprise activities.

- ii. To oversee the implementation of the University's Research and Innovation, and Knowledge Exchange Strategic Plans (and associated Business Outcomes), according to the agreed investment in resources and timescales, and to ensure alignment across these activities.
- iii. To develop principles/frameworks/policies/regulations/procedures governing the delivery, quality and continuous improvement of the University's research and innovation, knowledge exchange and enterprise activities
- iv. To ensure a framework is in place to foster a research, innovation and enterprise culture that supports delivery of the objectives in the Research and Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Strategic Plans.
- v. To develop, agree and monitor University action plans including RGCI and KE income delivery plans, HEIF, Concordat action plan (HR, KE), MDRT delivery plans and others as appropriate.
- vi. To systematically review the relevant Corporate and Faculty level risks with implications for research, innovation, knowledge exchange and enterprise.
- vii. To engage with, listen to, and respond to the voice of researchers at Northumbria University.
- viii. To oversee and monitor the external context for research and innovation and knowledge exchange activity.

#### **Performance Monitoring and Review**

- i. To monitor University-wide and Faculty-level performance to support delivery of KPIs for research quality, research and KE income, and PGR student numbers.
- ii. To advise, and seek advice from Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellors, Heads of Department and Directors of Research and KE on the implementation of Faculty plans to deliver the strategic plan objectives.
- iii. To have a high level overview of the physical, human and financial resources deployed to deliver the Research and Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Plans and advise (as appropriate) the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Business and Enterprise) and the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Employability and Partnerships), and the University Executive on resource implications, in line with budgetary and planning processes.

#### **Policy and Regulation**

- i. To ensure policy and regulatory frameworks are in place to ensure compliance with national policy and the University's statutory and/or regulatory and ethical duties relating to research, innovation and enterprise, providing assurance to Academic Board, University Executive and, ultimately the Board of Governors. This includes policy impact assessment of sector bodies, including UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Research England, Innovate UK, and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).
- ii. To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of frameworks /policies /regulations /procedures governing the delivery, quality assurance and continuous improvement of all aspects of research, innovation, knowledge exchange and enterprise activity, ensuring that they are fit for purpose to deliver University Strategy and to ensure compliance with external regulation. This includes external evaluation frameworks such as REF and KEF and continuous improvement processes such as the KE Concordat.
- iii. Concordat to support the development of researchers
- iv. Concordat on open research data and Knowledge Exchange
- v. Terms and conditions of externally funded grants and contracts for research and KE activity
- vi. Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS)