

RE-P-2020-03-Annex B

# Nottingham Trent University

## HEIF accountability statement

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

**Return date: 21 May 2021**

Return as Microsoft Word file to: [KEPolicy@re.ukri.org](mailto:KEPolicy@re.ukri.org)

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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.*

### Knowledge Exchange at the heart of the University Strategy

Nottingham Trent University is a leading civic university and one of the largest universities in the country with 36,000 students. Knowledge exchange is at the heart of our 2020-25 strategy [University, reimagined](#). This comprises six key strategies and extracts of particular relevance to KE are provided below:

- **Enriching Society** has the ambition to be “a widely acknowledged force for good in social, cultural and economic development. We collaborate with those who like us want to address the key challenges of our times and places.” (HEIF Objectives: 1,2,4,5,6,8)
- **Valuing Ideas** a) “We will focus our attention on challenges that are relevant to our stakeholders locally and regionally as they are of global concern, partner with outstanding institutions that share our aspirations and recognise our contributions, are committed to apply our research to local and global challenges, deliver teaching and learning that engages with our community and welcome access to our campuses.” b) We will accelerate our performance in commercialisation and consultancy to share our

insights in ways to benefit of our partners, our society and our University”. (HEIF Objectives: 3,7,8)

- **Creating Opportunity** “We will engender a lifelong learning habit such that students and alumni from every background value their connection with NTU and contribute to its global community in the knowledge it will help them respond to their ever changing careers.” (HEIF Objective: 1,4,5,6,8)

### **Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Objectives and indicative actions**

The University’s strategic objectives for the HEIF investment are directly aligned to the fulfilment of our University, reimagined strategic plan.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1: To grow our role as a leading civic university, aligning our resources to the challenges of local communities.**

##### **Actions:**

- We will continue and grow our collaborative action with the D2N2 LEP, local authorities and community stakeholders;
- Strengthen and deliver our pioneering civic agreement through [Universities for Nottingham](#);
- Further our engagement and support of social, cultural and economic development in Nottinghamshire, with a strategic focus on Mansfield and Ashfield.

#### **OBJECTIVE 2: To support economic growth through a dynamic and innovative programme of support to SMEs.**

##### **Actions:**

- Leverage HEIF by developing and delivering new economic programmes which attract investment to support knowledge exchange;
- Work with economic partners to co-design, co-invest and co-deliver new place-based programmes that support enterprise development, high levels skills, access to graduate talent and resources to support innovation.

#### **OBJECTIVE 3: To increase the income measured through the Higher Education Business-Community Interaction Survey (HE-BCI) by exploiting our intellectual property and through the development of commercial programmes valued by our clients.**

##### **Actions:**

- Grow our income from licensing and the development of spin out activity;
- Create sustainable hubs of commercial activity delivering new products and services.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4: To grow our student and graduate enterprise community**

##### **Actions:**

- Expand the number of students engaged in enterprise education;
- Grow the number the students exploring self-employment and new business creation;

- Establish the *Dryden Enterprise Centre* as a hub of a new enterprise and innovation cluster in Nottingham.

**OBJECTIVE 5: To widen participation in University teaching and learning through lifelong learning and flexible routes to accessing our programmes which deliver high level skills.**

**Actions:**

- Grow the numbers of people benefitting from our *Creative Short Courses* providing professional development and access to continuing education;
- Develop new professional programmes delivered at Levels 4 & 5 through micro-accreditation;
- Continue to grow our publicly-funded programme of provision for high levels skills.

**OBJECTIVE 6: To develop innovative new approaches to knowledge exchange with businesses, the public and community, and grow the opportunities for student and graduate knowledge exchange.**

**Actions:**

- Develop new approaches to public engagement in research and practice;
- Increase the opportunities for student and graduate KE through live projects, placements, business challenges and community-engaged learning.

**OBJECTIVE 7: To develop new approaches to evaluating knowledge exchange, understanding what works and demonstrating impact.**

**Actions:**

- Develop a network of evaluation researchers and academics in the university to exchange good practice and develop an evaluation toolkit applicable to KE;
- Further embed evaluation into economic programmes and within our broader KE activity and to undertake topical evaluation studies;
- Work with other university partners, local authorities and economic development agencies to inform policy both from research and practice.

**OBJECTIVE 8: To share good practice and to establish a process of continuous improvement through the implementation of the KE Concordat.**

**Actions:**

- Through the KE Concordat workplan, implement new methods of evaluating and improving KE processes;
- Create an NTU Institute for KE and Practice to support innovation in KE and share good practice across the institution and with our partners;
- Establish an annual NTU festival of KE and Practice.

## 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>HEIF part-funds a central team “Knowledge Exchange” department that supports KE across the University. This has 11.4 FTEs funded by HEIF working across several of our KE objectives. These roles have been apportioned across the objectives below.</p>				<p>2021-22 and onwards.</p>
<p>1.1 Supporting our role as a leading civic university including investment into the Universities for Nottingham partnership and delivery of its Civic Agreement.</p>	<p>3 FTE funded through HEIF.</p>	<p>Aligns to ‘levelling up’ aspirations of <i>Build Back Better</i> (2021). Through this work we will explore opportunities for place-based investment the Towns Fund, Levelling Up and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>	<p><b>Objective 1:</b> “To grow our role as a leading civic university, aligning our resources to the challenges of local communities.”</p>	<p>2021-22 and onwards.</p>
<p>1.2 Creating new KE opportunities for the arts and education sector through ChalleNGe Nottingham.</p>	<p>1 FTE supporting the Executive Dean for Culture.</p>	<p>Supports DfE aims of improving the well-being of children and young people (<i>State of the nation 2020: children and young people’s wellbeing</i>) and Arts Council England’s delivery plan <i>Let’s Create Strategy</i> supporting children’s</p>	<p><b>Objective 1:</b> “To grow our role as a leading civic university, aligning our resources to the challenges of local communities.”</p>	<p>2021-22</p>

		access to high quality cultural experiences.		
2.1 Economic programme co-design, development securing external investment for our engagement with local businesses. Current programmes leveraged with HEIF are listed below, with others in development.	2.4 FTE	Aligns to <i>Build Back Better</i> and aspirations for 'levelling up' and creating competitive cities and vibrant times supporting skills, innovation and net zero.	<b>Objective 2:</b> "To support economic growth through a dynamic and innovative programme of support to SMEs."	2021-22 and onwards.
2.2 ERDF Productivity through Innovation. Designed by academic 'champions' in the universities of Nottingham, Derby and NTU, this programme undertakes a productivity diagnostic which informs KE interventions from both academics and through graduate placements. A further evaluation examines productivity improvements. This will support 63 SMEs	HEIF investment is leveraged attracting ESIF (European Structural Investment Funding).	<i>Build Back Better</i> notes that economic growth is driven by increasing employment and productivity. Aligns with the D2N2 LEP's Strategic Economic Plan to boost productivity across the region.	<b>Objective 2:</b> "To support economic growth through a dynamic and innovative programme of support to SMEs."	Until March 2023
2.3 ERDF Sustainability in Enterprise delivering consultancy, graduate placements and grants that will enable sustainable growth in SMEs. Target to support 244 SMEs, place 86 graduates into professional roles within SMEs and achieve a CO2 reduction of 746 tonnes.	HEIF is leveraged attracting ESIF.	<i>Build Back Better</i> plans for the transition to a low carbon economy and the development of environmentally sustainable goods and services. Supports the City of Nottingham to achieve its ambition to be Carbon Neutral by 2028.	<b>Objective 2:</b> "To support economic growth through a dynamic and innovative programme of support to SMEs."	April 2021 – Jun 2023
2.5 ERDF LLEAD:NG Live Experimental and Digital Inclusion. Introducing SMEs to the creative and strategic possibilities of immersive technologies and techniques. Target 11 SMEs in the Greater Nottingham area.	HEIF investment is leveraged attracting ESIF.	Supports the key actions of the Business Productivity Review. Aligned to growth in adoption of digital	<b>Objective 2:</b> "To support economic growth through a dynamic and innovative programme of support to SMEs."	Jan 2021 – Jun 2023

		technologies. <i>Build Back Better</i> .		
3.1 Funding of central commercial and IP development supporting university-wide commercial services including consultancy and the protection, management and exploitation of intellectual property through licensing and spin-out creation and development.	2.5 FTE + 1 FTE (graduate intern for 2021-22).	Aligns to the <i>UK Research and Development Roadmap (2020)</i> which aims to secure economic and social benefits from research.	<b>Objective 3:</b> To grow the income measured through HE-BCI by exploiting our intellectual property and development of commercial programmes.	2021-22 and onwards.
3.2 Investment into academically-led sustainable commercial hubs awarded through open competition across the University.	Awarded through an open call across the University and the submission of commercially sustainable business plans.	New commercial activity will exploit IP and university facilities ( <i>UK Research and Development Roadmap</i> ) and create new skills for industry. ( <i>Skills for Jobs</i> )	<b>Objective 3:</b> To grow the income measured through HE-BCI by exploiting our intellectual property and development of commercial programmes.	2021-22 and onwards.
4.1 HEIF investment co-funds the NTU Enterprise team. This funding also leverages ERDF which supports enterprise development with SMEs.	4.5 FTEs supporting student and graduate enterprise and linking SMEs into the University.	Supporting the development of a “dynamic enterprise economy” ( <i>Build Back Better</i> )	<b>Objective 4:</b> To grow our student and graduate enterprise community.	2021-22 and onwards.
4.2 The Dryden Enterprise Centre (DEC) will open in spring 2021 creating a new focal point for enterprise activity in the University. HEIF-leveraged ERDF will assist 156 SMEs (between April 2019 and March 2022)	HEIF investment is leveraged attracting ESIF.	Investment in the DEC was awarded because it directly aligned to the D2N2 I Sustainable Urban Development Strategy (SUDS).	<b>Objective 4:</b> To grow our student and graduate enterprise community.	2021-22 until March 2022
5.1 Funding for the development and delivery of the Creative short course programme and other short courses for industry.	2.5 FTE	<i>Skills for Jobs (2021)</i> Aligned to the ambitions of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee and expansion of higher-level technical	<b>Objective 5:</b> To widen participation in University learning and teaching through lifelong learning and flexible routes to accessing our	2021-22 and onwards.



		qualifications enabling the acquisition of skills for work at whatever their stage of life.	high level skills programmes.	
5.2 Leverage for ESF High Level Skills programmes (i) Sustainability and Inclusion in Leadership (SAIL) & (ii) STEM skills.	HEIF investment is leveraged attracting ESIF.	Funding awarded for ESF programmes aligned to <i>DWP ESF Operational Programme</i> (2014 to 2020) and aligned to <i>D2N2 Vision 2030, Strategic Economic Plan</i> . National alignment to <i>Skills for Jobs</i> and <i>Build Back Better</i> .	<b>Objective 5:</b> To widen participation in University learning and teaching through lifelong learning and flexible routes to accessing our high level skills programmes.	Until December 2023.
6.1 Investment into innovative and sustainable KE strategically aligned to school plans awarded through open competition. This will also include funding to support novel forms of student KE, including live projects, business challenges and community-engaged learning.	Through open competition across the University, HEIF will be used to pump-prime innovative KE	Aligned to RE-OfS “benefits of KE” call which advocates for the role of students in KE and to support and to identify and monitor the achievements of student benefits, alongside economic and societal benefits.	<b>Objective 6:</b> To develop innovative new approaches to knowledge exchange with business, the public and community, and grow opportunities for student and graduate KE.	2021-22 and onwards.
7.1 Development of an NTU network of evaluation researchers and practitioners to create a toolkit of approaches to evaluating KE. HEIF investment will co-ordinate this network and co-fund annually commissioned evaluation studies. This work will also include economic analysis to support policy development for the Midlands Engine, D2N2 and local authorities.	0.7 FTE	Aligns to Research England and OfS requests to monitor and evaluate the impact of KE for HEIF, the KEF and Principle 8 of the KE Concordat “Evaluating Success”.	<b>Objective 7:</b> To develop new approaches to evaluating KE, understanding what works and demonstrating impact.	2021-22 and onwards.
8.1 Creation of an NTU Institute for KE and Practice with an annual workplan co-designed by school representatives. The Institute will establish an	1 FTE	Coherent with Research England / OfS	<b>Objective 8:</b> To share good practice and to	2021-22 and onwards.

annual NTU conference and festival on KE and practice.		guidelines on the use of HEIF. The conference will explore key themes of and of UK and local policy to support skills, innovation, net zero and the levelling up agenda.	establish a process of continuous improvement through the implementation of the KE Concordat.	
8.2 Refine and develop KE processes outlined in our KE Concordat action plan.	Supported by dedicated KE roles outlined in 8.1 above.	Aligned to the principles of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.	<b>Objective 8:</b> To share good practice and to establish a process of continuous improvement through the implementation of the KE Concordat.	2021-22 and 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.*

#### **i) Managing HEIF Spending**

The University's HEIF is strategically overseen by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise.

The HEIF five-year Annual Monitoring Statement has been reviewed and approved by the University Executive Team, chaired by the Vice Chancellor.

The management and monitoring of HEIF expenditure is undertaken by the Director of Knowledge Exchange, working with the Finance Business Partner, for the DVC R&E Directorate.

Progress on the HEIF workplan forms part of the objectives of the Director of Knowledge Exchange and is discussed within line management meetings and also within the bi-annual appraisal process.

As the plan outlines in question 2, some funding is allocated to KE infrastructure, including the Knowledge Exchange Team and NTU Enterprise Team. Some HEIF is awarded through internal open competition and applications are assessed by internal expert panel. A condition of such this discretionary funding is that a final report outlines the outputs and outcomes of the provided investment, together with a plan about how new KE will be evaluated and communicated.

## **ii) Measuring progress**

The Director of Knowledge Exchange monitors and reports on the progress of the HEIF workplan to the DVC Research and Enterprise each month.

Progress is also reported in quarterly KE and commercial review meetings with the DVC Research and Enterprise, the Director of Knowledge Exchange and each Executive Dean of School. These reviews report on School KE performance and activity. They also highlight new and emerging areas of KE of strategic importance to the school and which could be accelerated and become sustainable with HEIF investment.

HEIF supported Knowledge Exchange is a standing item on the agenda for the monthly Academic Research Leadership Team meeting attended by Associate Deans of Research and chaired the Executive Dean of Research.

Further discussion about HEIF supported activity and progress is shared within the fortnightly departmental leadership meetings held by the DVC Research and Enterprise.

The Annual Monitoring Statement is completed by the Director of Knowledge Exchange with the Finance Business Partner. It is approved by the DVC R& E before submission.

## **iii) Evaluating outcomes**

Evaluation occurs in several ways:

- a) Progress against the eight HEIF objectives will be recorded each year and returned in the HEIF Annual Monitoring Statement. We are exploring new ways of evaluating knowledge exchange, which will supplement these metrics and support the broader communication and dissemination about NTU KE and its contribution to the economy and society.
- b) HEIF-leveraged economic programmes - All European Structural Investment (ESIF) and other government funded programmes have evaluation frameworks and we continuously monitor and evaluate the outputs and outcomes of our support to SMEs and individuals. We have begun to develop new approaches to evaluation which go beyond statutory reporting and we are utilising and building academic expertise to understand 'what works' and to demonstrate the efficacy of our interventions;
- c) All academic recipients of HEIF are required to report on the outputs and outcomes of the investment;
- d) Through the KE Concordat workplan, we will review how we evaluate the KE experience, outputs and outcomes of external collaborators and partners. While we have systematic

evaluation processes in place to support many aspects of KE, in some areas this is less well developed, which we are reviewing and improving.

**iv) Identifying lessons learned**

The establishment of an NTU Institute for KE and Practice will create new fora and networks to share good practice and identify lessons learned. This dialogue will be integral to the aims of our KE Concordat work plan as we continuously improve our KE processes and procedures.

We will establish an annual festival of KE and practice that will also enable us to celebrate our successes, reflect upon activities which have been less successful and to identify where future improvements can be made.

NTU is actively engaged in a number of networks and collaborative programmes with other university partners, including Universities for Nottingham, Midlands Enterprise Universities and we participate and contribute to the work of Praxis Auril. We seek to learn from others and to share our experiences and lessons learned with other KE leaders and practitioners in the sector.