

RE-P-2020-03-Annex B

Royal Agricultural 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.

The Royal Agriculture University (RAU), Cirencester, is a small specialist land-based Higher Education Institution (HEI). The RAU is proud of its 'place' and strives to be a university with a strong civic mission that recognises historic and contemporary culture. Our knowledge exchange strategy is central to our institutional mission to support the land-based sector, rural enterprises and AgriTech innovation and to communicate with clarity about food, farming, and rural issues. Our knowledge exchange activity is driven by the societal need to address climate change, ecological restoration, the need for a transformational post-Brexit agri-food policy and for food production to provide a catalyst for COVID-19 recovery. There are wide implications for the agricultural and rural sector from the impact of COVID-19 including the drive for levelling up and the Build Back Better Agenda. All these issues require innovative approaches and building of capacity and resilience within the agri-food sector to harness the opportunity for accelerated change and transition.

RAU academics demonstrate a strong 'knowledge exchange mindset' and our knowledge exchange is focused on collaborating expertly with government, industry, civil society and other academic institutions and involvement of students in real-world learning. Our underpinning knowledge exchange mission is: *'To impact industry, government, employers*

& rural and urban communities by providing focused thought leadership, relevant research outputs and shaping policy through the development of dedicated interfaces with our stakeholders.’ This mission is supported and framed by innovative research and disseminating best practice.

The RAU’s knowledge exchange strategy is focused on four key areas:

1. **Rural Collaborative Policy**: to initiate ‘*thought leadership*’ activities that provides intellectual influence, unique collaborative strategic insight, and innovative thinking to address the policy challenges facing government and rural industries.
2. **Rural Innovation Support**: to facilitate farm and land-based practitioner-led innovation and sharing of best practice.
3. **Rural Enterprise Acceleration**: to accelerate the establishment and growth of rural enterprises and businesses.
4. **Rural Skills and Business Acumen**: to provide world-leading focused professional development programmes in rural, agricultural, and agri-food supply chain management and high-quality technical skills essential to optimise and enhance food production and the management of land.

Our knowledge exchange strategy seeks to bridge between rural and urban areas through a dynamic integration of science, policy, and practice. RAU academics support policy makers at local, national and international level in industry, government and civil society organisations in finding ‘*nature-based solutions...in building sustainable agricultural and food supply chains*’ as outlined in the UKRI Roadmap. Emergent legislation within the Environment Bill 2021 and Agriculture Act 2020 highlights the need for a sustainable and resilient local and national economy, and the local policy developments in Gloucestershire, aligned with local infrastructural and community growth agendas. The RAU is actively engaged in shaping the future direction of land-based mitigation, natural capital and the net zero carbon agenda. The university is also involved with a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded “wild campus” project. Furthermore, in 2020, through a partnership with Swindon Borough Council, the University acquired a £1.8m facility in the former railway village, for research and teaching in cultural heritage, located adjacent to the headquarters of the UK’s national heritage bodies that will enable us to co-locate with others to influence national policy.

We aim to enable local economic growth through the provision of innovation support services, access to the Farm491 knowledge hub and space for innovation. Our academics use novel approaches to facilitate collaboration and co-learning with students, farmers, charities and businesses through learning labs and land-based and supply chain practice-led case studies. In April 2021, we launched the Centre for Effective Innovation in Agriculture (CEIA) at the RAU, funded by the Elizabeth Creek Foundation. This is a collaboration between five agricultural universities to put farmer priorities at the heart of agricultural research.

Our cross-institution KE programmes support rural entrepreneurship acceleration, enabling wider and deeper stakeholder partnerships to deliver the national Build Back Better Agenda and place based on Gloucestershire’s Local Enterprise Partnership (GFirst LEP) priorities. Central to this approach is the creation of pathways for business and social enterprise

development within our student, alumni, and local communities through the Cirencester Growth Hub, and our Farm491 AgriTech incubator and accelerator. Recently we established a new Joint Institute in Advanced Agri-technology with Qingdao Agricultural University in China and we are the only UK small specialist institution to have gained Chinese Ministry of Education approval for a Joint Institute. Furthermore, the existing RAU Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme (EEP) provides a robust and supportive programme for all RAU students - from embryo of an idea through to the launch of a fully tried and tested business. Through this programme the RAU has successfully demonstrated the value to students of developing practical enterprise skills, which can be transferred into either employment or their own start-up businesses.

The RAU has a strong reputation in providing professional training and development programmes and skills-based technical training run in collaboration with many charities and industry bodies. Through our short, longer, and on-line professional development programmes we provide individuals with the skills and strategic insight required to effectively lead and manage businesses. The John Oldacre Rural Innovation Centre supports high-quality technical skills development essential to optimise food production and management of land.

In recent years, the RAU has invested significantly in KE activities through (co-funding) of specific projects and programmes. The RAU aspires to be a KE intensive university, hence, dedicated time in the workload model of academics of KE activities allows them to meaningful engage with the public and other communities. In the coming years we aim to build on our current activities so we can continue to develop research-informed programmes that drive policy and practice associated with the land-based sector, rural enterprises and AgriTech. There is a strong need to build resilience and sustainable businesses in the context of post-Brexit and COVID-related economic recovery and regeneration and we have a vital role as an institution to support and facilitate entrepreneurial and dynamic solutions.

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>Planned areas of HEIF supported KE activity</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>HEIF support</p> <p>How HEIF will be used to support the project?</p>	<p>HEIF priorities</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>Strategic objectives</p> <p>Which institutional strategic KE objective does this relate to?</p>	<p>Indication of timescales</p>
<p>1. Thought Leadership</p> <p>RAU academics are involved in KE activities focused on meeting the needs of public stakeholders and community groups around food security and food safety and access to affordable, nutritious food for all. Activities including organising policy workshops, consultancy to provide input in local and national strategy and publication of policy paper and parliamentary reports e.g., for example RAU academic involvement in development of the National Food Strategy, co-authoring the Food, Farming & Countryside Commission report and contributing to the Institute of Food Science and Technology COVID-19 advisory group contribution to parliamentary reports and dissemination activities to multiple stakeholder groups.</p>				
<p><i>Activity 1.1</i> Supporting Academic Thought Leadership activities</p>	<p>Academic staff buyout and other non-staff costs to support dissemination activities, policy development, workshop costs and travel & transportation.</p>	<p>Supports the 'Ideas' and 'Place' pillar of IS and Building Back Better (BBB) Innovation pillar by influencing policy and practice toward local growth, innovation and moving to net zero by 2040.</p>	<p>Rural Collaborative Policy</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>2. Farmer-Led Innovation Network (FLIN) and the Centre for Effective Innovation in Agriculture</p> <p>FLIN was established in October 2018 to share knowledge and experiences and provide a collective advocacy voice for farmers. The main aim is to understand, learn from and 'power-up' farmer-led innovation initiatives and increase their economic, environmental and social impact across the industry. Over 20 organisations are part of the network, including governmental and non-governmental organisations, research institutes, the levy board, farmer organisations and advisory services. The network brings together approximately 1,500 farmers directly involved in farmer-led innovation across the UK.</p>				
<p><i>Activity 2.1</i> Supporting academic input into FLIN network development, network interaction and communication</p>	<p>Academic staff buyout for facilitating network interaction and other non-staff costs to support communication and travel & transportation.</p>	<p>Supports the 'Ideas' and 'People' pillar of IS and supports the BBB Innovation pillar by support and incentivising practice led innovation.</p>	<p>Rural Innovation Support:</p>	<p>ongoing</p>

3. Farm 491 programme

Farm491 is a UK based leading technology incubator and business accelerator and innovation space focused on the future of farming and food systems. Based at, and owned by, the RAU, Farm491 works with entrepreneurs through all their stages of growth leveraging our unique innovation ecosystem of academic, industry and farming contacts and in house experts to help companies achieve their aspirations primarily through strategic advice, support raising investment, finding the right talent to build their team, access to new customers and being part of a network of other entrepreneurs. (see also HEIF Case study 1)

<p><i>Activity 3.1</i> Increasing in-house capacity to support rural entrepreneurs to grow our membership base and provide a high standard of member support. The Innovation and Business Specialist will be responsible for scaling Agri-Tech innovation to boost member companies' productivity and success at meeting and where possible exceeding their business objectives. The aim is to support an extra 75 companies over the next 3 years (totalling 150 active memberships as a minimum). Many of these will be local companies developing and based in Gloucestershire.</p>	<p>KE dedicated staff: x1 Innovation and business specialist post, 50% HEIF funded</p>	<p>Supports 'Ideas' pillar of IS, by enabling start-up/SME business growth and also "Place" by encouraging the growth of local start-ups and SMEs.</p> <p>Supports the Build Back Better Innovation and Net Zero objectives through helping the development of new ideas, products and processes. In the Agri-Tech sector most start-ups are developing business ideas that contribute to achieving Net Zero</p>	<p>Rural Enterprise Acceleration and Rural Innovation Support:</p> <p>Benefits RAU students as through the innovation ecosystem there are more companies for them to collaborate with in terms of research or job opportunities. Students can also join Farm491 as student members. Many of Farm491's start-ups hire through the RAU for internships or graduate roles – supports enhanced employability prospects.</p>	<p>21-22 onwards</p>
<p><i>Activity 3.2</i> Delivering 3 accelerator programmes to AgriTech start-ups over the next 3 years who require expert knowledge on current agricultural challenges/topics. Many of these will be business specific e.g., getting investment ready, developing a robust business plan etc.</p>	<p>Academic staff buyout for delivery of an agriculture specific accelerator programme for early-stage AgriTech start-ups.</p>	<p>Supports 'Ideas' and 'Place' pillars of IS and supports BBB Innovation and Net Zero objectives as described above.</p>	<p>Rural Enterprise Acceleration and Rural Innovation Support:</p>	<p>21-22 to 23-24</p>
<p><i>Activity 3.3</i> Delivering an AgriTech Season to support knowledge exchange and underpin thought leadership and dissemination of best practice between innovative start-ups/SMEs, academics and students. The season will</p>	<p>Academic staff buyout for delivery of content and other non-staff costs in terms of event costs e.g.,</p>	<p>Supports the Build Back Better Innovation and Skills objectives.</p>	<p>Rural Collaborative Policy and Rural Enterprise Acceleration</p> <p>Benefits RAU staff and students as creates an</p>	<p>21-22 onwards - reoccurring Feb - April each year</p>

comprise of approximately 6 events culminating in a showcase.	space hire, catering, speakers	Supports 'Ideas' pillar of IS, by enabling start-up/SME business growth.	opportunity to engage with leading AgriTech start-ups and knowledge dissemination and enhances the student learning experience.	
4. Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme (EEP) The award winning extra-curricular start up support programme for current RAU students (https://www.rau.ac.uk/study/enterprise-entrepreneurship) provides an inspiring and supportive environment in which students can share, develop and launch their business ideas. Through this programme the RAU has successfully demonstrated the value to students of developing practical enterprise skills, which can be transferred into either employment or their own start-up businesses. (see also HEIF Case study 2)				
<i>Activity 4.1</i> Delivering webinars/workshops on key areas such as IP, accounts, tax etc., as well as proof of concept funding (students can apply for £250 to develop their initial idea). This is part of a wider student enterprise support programme – see further activities.	Other non-staff costs in terms of event costs e.g., space hire, catering, speakers, and concept funding.	Supports 'Ideas' pillar of IS, by enabling the innovation ecosystem at the university with start-up/SME business growth and also "Place" by encouraging the growth of local start-ups and SMEs. Supports the Build Back Better Innovation and Skills objectives by supporting around 100 students each year at the engagement level and helping around 20 to develop their business ideas further and around 10 to start a business/register as a sole trader.	Rural Enterprise Acceleration:	ongoing
<i>Activity 4.2</i> Supporting the Grand Idea competition which encourages students to write and submit a business plan for their new business and present a pitch to an expert panel for the chance to win £2.5k.	Other non-staff costs in terms of event costs e.g., space hire, catering, speakers	Supports 'Ideas' pillar of IS and Supports the Build Back Better Innovation and Skills objectives as described above	Rural Enterprise Acceleration:	ongoing

<p><i>Activity 4.3</i> Developing and delivering a new competition with the support of a private investor to encourage innovation and new business start-ups in the agri-food chain sector be aimed at postgraduates and recent alumni.</p>	<p>Other non-staff costs in terms of competition promotion materials and event costs e.g., space hire, catering and experts involvement</p>	<p>Supports 'Ideas' pillar of IS and Supports the Build Back Better Innovation and Skills objectives as described above</p>	<p>Rural Enterprise Acceleration and Rural Innovation Support:</p>	<p>21-22 onwards</p>
<p>5. Student social enterprise (SMEs) projects Two student social enterprise projects, the craft ale (muddywellies.org.uk) and wine (cotswoldhills.org.uk) have been established by the student community, supported by RAU staff. This has have proven an excellent platform for student engagement. The social enterprise has voluntary student teams who have access to all areas of the enterprises, from production to marketing and new product development. In addition, the social enterprises are used as live business case studies in a number of RAU taught modules (see also HEIF Case study 2)</p>				
<p><i>Activity 5.1.</i> Supporting new product development, labelling, and packaging for products.</p>	<p>Other non-staff costs related to new product development, pilot scale processing of the product, developing the labelling and customer proposition.</p>	<p>Supports 'Ideas' pillar of IS and Supports the Build Back Better Innovation and Skills objectives by engaging approx. 100 students a year through extra-curricular activities and via taught modules.</p>	<p>Rural Enterprise Acceleration:</p>	<p>21-22 onwards</p>
<p>6. Cirencester Growth Hub The Cirencester Growth hub is the second of 5 Growth Hubs to open in Gloucestershire. Since opening in July 2018, the Cirencester Growth Hub has directly supported more than 250 local businesses, hosted over 100 business events and workshops, and is currently providing professional workspace to 36 SMEs (employing on average 2 people each). The support is in the form of one-to-one business advice, workshops, affordable and professional co-working space, a collaborative community, incubator offices and meeting rooms.</p>				
<p><i>Activity 6.1</i> Supporting business support activities over the next two years that have been impacted by reduced income due to COVID (until Growth Hub is self-sustaining in funding again). This activity will focus on post-Covid and post-Brexit recovery activities for local businesses especially microbusinesses and SMEs.</p>	<p>Other non-staff costs to support event and workshop costs and expert business advisors.</p>	<p>Supports 'Ideas' pillar of IS and Supports the Build Back Better Innovation and Skills objectives by providing tailored support to local businesses</p>	<p>Rural Enterprise Acceleration</p>	<p>2021-22 and 22-23</p>

7. Accredited technical skills level, 2, 3 and 4 training courses through the John Oldacre Rural Innovation Centre				
<i>Activity 7.1</i> Developing new delivery model for technical and business skills training and delivery of more innovative and accessible ways of learning for students.	KE dedicated staff: x1 training development and coordination post 30% HEIF funded	Supports the 'People' pillar of IS, objective 3 of the OfS strategy and BBB Skills pillar by providing high quality skills training for on average 1500 student skills days per year.	Rural Skills and Business Acumen	2019-20 onwards
8. Professional development programmes in rural, agricultural and agri-food supply chain management and leadership				
The RAU has a strong reputation in providing world-leading professional training and development programmes and skills-based training run in collaboration with many charities and industry bodies. Examples include courses for the Institute of Agricultural Management, the John Edgar Trust and the Worshipful Company of Farmers.				
<i>Activity 8.1</i> Developing and delivering short and longer (2-3 weeks) residential and online courses life-long courses in collaboration with employers (employer-led) in the rural and land-based sector to manage and drive business innovation and resilience.	KE dedicated staff: x1 CPD development and coordination post 30% HEIF funded Academic staff buyout to develop course content and deliver the pilot course.	Supports the 'People' pillar of IS, objective 3 of the OfS strategy and BBB Skills pillar of by providing high quality skills training for on average 300 delegate learning days a year. Delegates from the rural and land-based sector	Rural Skills and Business Acumen	ongoing
<i>Activity 8.2</i> Development of new CPD online short courses from level 4 to 7 in line with industry and sector demand such as Farm Business Management and Management and Leadership for Cultural Heritage and Heritage, Regeneration and Place Making	Academic staff buyout to develop course content and deliver the pilot course.	Supports the 'People' and Place pillar of IS, objective 3 of the OfS strategy and BBB Skills pillar of by providing high quality skills training for on average 100 delegate learning days a year. Delegates from the cultural heritage, rural and land-based sector	Rural Skills and Business Acumen	21-22 onwards

9. Further development of the RAU Student placement and apprenticeship programme				
<i>Activity 9.1</i> Development and support to student placements of 15 weeks to 12 months.	Academic staff buyout to further develop and support the student placement programme	Supports the 'People' and Place pillar of IS, objective 3 of the OfS strategy and BBB Skills pillar of by providing high quality skills training to 150 students.	<i>Rural Skills and Business Acumen</i>	ongoing and 21-22 onwards
<i>Activity 9.2</i> Development and delivery of new level 3 Archaeological Technician apprenticeship linked to the Stonehenge Tunnel project	Academic staff buyout to further develop and support the student apprenticeship programme	Supports the 'People' and Place pillar of IS, objective 3 of the OfS strategy and BBB Skills pillar of by providing high quality skills training to 12 students.	<i>Rural Skills and Business Acumen</i>	21-22 onwards
10. KE institutional capacity development				
Two dedicated KE roles support the on-going development and implementation of the institutional strategy and providing support to academics to develop and deliver their KE activities. Further investment is planned in building the KE capacity of academics through internal and external CPD to capacity build and provide the skills to deliver the programmes outlined above.				
<i>Activity 10.1</i> Providing dedicated KE and research support (including consultancy support for businesses) to RAU academics and KE programmes including supporting knowledge dissemination through public lectures and community engagement.	KE dedicated staff: x1 50% HEIF funded Head of Knowledge Exchange and Research Support and x1 60% Knowledge Exchange Event Coordinator and related other non-staff costs for public and community engagement		Overarching institutional objective to improve research impact and KE performance and to build and embed the goal of being a KE intensive university	ongoing
<i>Activity 10.2</i> Building the KE capacity of academics through internal and external KE training for public and community engagement and business network development	Academic staff buyout to attend training and other non-staff costs to support event and workshop costs and the engagement of expert trainers		Overarching institutional objective to improve research impact and KE performance and be a KE intensive university	21-22 and onwards for new staff

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.

The resource provided through HEIF supports our institutional KE objectives, working alongside internal (dedicated core funding) and external funding (e.g., investment from GFirst LEP and ERDF co-funding). The HEIF funding allocation has allowed the RAU to enhance its capacity to improve the management and support of our KE activity and lay the foundations for an ambitious programme of activity coherent with the institution's existing strategy and future aspirations for the coming years. Currently work is ongoing to develop a more robust KE Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system and embed MEL practices in all KE activities. We are developing this approach in line with our institutional engagement with the KE Concordant.

A new Director of Knowledge Exchange was appointed in July 2020 to ensure prioritisation of the strategic development and operational oversight of KE across the institution. Two further dedicated KE roles support the on-going development and implementation of the strategy, a Head of Knowledge Exchange and Research Support appointed in July 2019 and a Knowledge Exchange Event Coordinator in March 2019. Both roles are partly funded through HEIF and focus on providing support to academics to inform research design to ensure that the research plan integrates KE, engages (end-)users and other stakeholders, has a clear research dissemination plan and ensures monitoring of KE activities.

Moreover, a Knowledge Exchange Committee (KEC) is responsible for implementing the University's Knowledge Exchange Strategy and the promotion and coordination of associated KE activity, specifically to promote and encourage knowledge exchange and scholarship across the institution. The KEC also provides, on behalf of Academic Board and Governing Council, oversight and governance of activities and has responsibility for all policies and processes relating to KE activities at the University, and their

implementation, with regards to the HEIF funding, the Knowledge Exchange Framework, and the KE Concordat. The KEC includes, apart from RAU KE support and programme staff and a student representative, an external industry representative to ensure the work is relevant to the sector. Separately, monthly financial reviews of HEIF expenditure and regular quarterly reviews of progress take place to ensure both efficiencies in operational performance are achieved and programme delivery channels are continually improved and enhanced.

The RAU has always positioned itself at the forefront of 'applied research' hence we aspire to measure not only KE (or information transfer) but also the utilisation and exploitation of such knowledge. In addition to monitoring the financial information that is collated for HE BCI data, we are working towards a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system that apart from activity-based monitoring also records the intended target audience and measures the outcome and anticipated impact of the knowledge exchange, see Table 1 RAU HEIF results MEL framework. This requires creating mechanisms to monitor and determine whether these activities influenced and changed the behaviour of the end-user community and whether the KE has been used e.g., evidence in change of policy or practice. Ensuring effective exploitation requires integration of stakeholder engagement mechanisms from the start of any research and KE activity and we promote a collaborative learning design to KE and research uptake. For example, in our KE thought leadership work we aim to link the supply of research with creation of KE activities to provide the evidence (demand) into emergent UK policy, helping government, industry and civil society navigate change and uncertainty. This includes the facilitation of engagement strategies to bring together stakeholders from research, policy and practice into effective learning networks and communities of practice such as the work done on the National Food Strategy, the National Animal Welfare Strategy, work with the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and the Farmer Led Innovation Network. The value delivered to the RAU from our KE activity and the associated MEL processes is how it informs our teaching and research practice and how we continuously improve as an institution and how we deliver our planned outcomes and beneficial impacts for the general public and the communities we serve, both internal and external to the university.

Furthermore, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, chaired by the Director of Research, monitors and promotes research and KE equality and diversity. The Committee supports statutory equality obligations, OfS requirements and actively works to support the University commitment to be a fully inclusive institution, welcoming people from a diverse range of backgrounds and promoting equality of opportunity for students, staff and other stakeholders. This equality of opportunity is achieved through the development of strategies, procedures and practices to foster inclusion, raise awareness and celebrate difference in the RAU community and in the wider land-based higher education and business sectors. The Code of Practice explicitly includes policies in this area. In 2021, the University set up an independent Diversity Commission to examine the institution's long-term record in race and diversity inclusivity, and to make recommendations as to how this might be further improved.

Table 1 RAU HEIF results MEL framework

Outputs (activity-based results)	Outcomes	Impacts (linked to OfS strategy, IS and BBB)
Rural Collaborative Policy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of policy workshops organised • Thought leadership consultancy income • Number of policy papers and parliamentary reports; webinars and media engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Evidence of change in policy or practice ➔ Increased consultancy income ➔ Number and reach of (end) user organisations shown to have used information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Government, business and civil society organisation policies and practices relating to local growth, innovation and net zero influenced by RAU knowledge and expertise ✓ RAU reputation as bridge between science, policy and practice ✓ Improved relevance of policy teaching and research and the implementation of a knowledge feedback loop
Rural Skills and Business Acumen		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students in technical skills level, 2, 3 and 4 training courses • Number of students in CPD level 4 to 7 • Number of student placements • Number of apprenticeship placements • Number of employees linked to courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ New professional short courses available ➔ Increased RAU income from short course ➔ Publicity associated with courses and the development of greater industry networks to the benefit of the student body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved skills in the agri-food and rural enterprise community ✓ Maintain RAU reputation as professional development programme and technical skills provider in agri-food and rural land management and cultural heritage ✓ Improved relevance of RAU teaching and research to the sector
Rural Innovation Support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new to the market products from start-up businesses • Number of accelerator programmes • Number of research partnerships • Number of innovation networks established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Research opportunities identified in collaboration with industry collaborators ➔ Publicity associated with innovation support events ➔ Network events and programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Innovation opportunities identified, shared and adopted in agri-food, land-based and cultural heritage sectors. ✓ Improved relevance to businesses and community enterprises of RAU teaching and research ✓ Increased uptake of programmes and activities.
Rural Enterprise Acceleration		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of start-ups and number of development companies • Number of hires, Investment raised by members • Number of student/alumni members especially STEM based • Number of Gloucestershire-based businesses • Number of relocations to Gloucestershire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ New rural local businesses established with links to RAU academic expertise. ➔ Increased number of opportunities for students to collaborate with businesses in terms of research or job opportunities. ➔ Increased number of internships or graduate roles and enhanced employability prospects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Local growth related to growth of local start-ups and SMEs and increased employment opportunities. ✓ RAU reputation in enterprise acceleration further enhanced. ✓ Development and embedding of innovation ecosystem with business ideas that contribute to achieving Net Zero. ✓ Improved relevance of business-related RAU teaching.