



Research  
England



**RE-P-2020-03-Annex B**

# University of Birmingham

## 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.*

*(max 2 pages of A4)*

The University of Birmingham's primary goal in relation to knowledge exchange and, therefore our use of HEIF funding, is to translate our world-class research into significant economic and societal impact locally, nationally and globally. We will achieve this through the following KE objectives:

**KEO1. Growing and developing strategic academic-industry relationships** (leading to enhanced research income and simplified ('hiding the wiring') research translation into business and the economy);

**KEO2. Accelerating academic enterprise** (from IP development to spinout formation and business incubation (BizzInn, BioHub, Research Park) leading to a stronger entrepreneurial culture; higher number and quality of commercialisation deals; attraction of external investors and entrepreneurs; new growth businesses; and jobs);

**KEO3. Development of student enterprise and skills** (leading to graduates with skills honed by exposure to real business challenges giving enhanced employability or their own growth companies.)

It is important to appreciate that, at the time of writing, there is a significant amount of change occurring both within and external to the University. Thus, whilst much of our planned areas of support build on previous activities that were yielding excellent results, there will also be activities to come that reflect:

- An emerging new 2030 Strategic Framework (to be completed c. July 2021) which will include a specific pillar on “Engagement and Impact” and which will help to identify shared goals across the institution;
- A new Knowledge Exchange Concordat Action Plan (to be completed c. July 2021);
- New innovation assets, including for example, “The Exchange” building (opening Autumn 2021) and a new Birmingham Health Innovation Campus on which the Precision Health Technology Accelerator is set to open c. 2023;
- The need for increasing connectivity and collaboration both within the University, the region, the UK and internationally;

The HEIF strategy will be reviewed in the next year to ensure full alignment with:

- The University’s new 2030 Strategic Framework
- The new Knowledge Exchange Concordat Action Plan
- The plans and priorities of new members of staff (New Vice Chancellor, new Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Transfer, and new CEO of University of Birmingham Enterprise)

## 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)

<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>
<b>Business Engagement Strategic Partnership Cultivation</b>  Strategic support of institutional research programmes to align to Industrial challenges  Understanding and proactively identifying the demand led challenges of business  Aligning UoB strategic themes to external demand  Understanding Research England priorities and the industrial challenges to be addressed and seeking out regional national opportunities to work in partnership with business to support UK Plc  Engagement with intermediary networks, CBI, Chamber of Commerce, trade organisations to build relationships and develop income opportunities  Development of an Account Management Tool-Kit for Strategic Industry Partners (SIPs) and Key Industry Partners (KIPs)	5.5 FTE focused on cultivating and account managing strategic partnerships  100% HEIF funded	Supporting delivery of the key foundations around “Ideas”, “People” and their role in supporting “Place”.  Supporting government priorities and contribution to COVID-19 crisis and recovery through research activity and expertise.  Supporting the Government’s levelling up agenda through collaborations and partnerships centred on the research and industry strengths of the midlands	KEO1. Growing and developing strategic academic-industry relationships	Ongoing with annual review

<p>Identifying across UoB opportunities for Education, Degree Apprenticeships, CPD, Student engagement and entrepreneurship and CSR/Philanthropy</p> <p>Developing the offer to business encompassing all that UoB has to offer</p> <p>Continuous Improvement &amp; Data. MI through key systems – CRM</p> <p>KPI is to deliver 5 strategic partnerships over the course of 2021-2025 – with clear and defined outcomes for what a SIP should deliver with measurable income, impact and influence</p>				
<p><b>Business Engagement Communication &amp; Marketing</b></p> <p>Lead generation to develop pipeline of opportunities by promoting UoB research via events, social media, networks, sponsorship...</p> <p>Stewardship of clients pre and post research collaboration cycle</p> <p>Impact – with regards to REF, KEF and TEF demonstrate to external audiences the power of research and its reach and significance to society, health, economy, policy</p> <p>Engagement of researchers on external panels, conferencing, exhibiting and role of UoB as an anchor University to convene and lead on thought leadership opportunities with the region and nationally</p>	<p>3 FTE focussed on digital and physical comms and marketing activity</p> <p>100% HEIF funded</p>	<p>Supporting the approach to balance predictability in funding with regular rewards for dynamism through academic incentives to engage with the 'Impact and Engagement' strand of UoB's strategic framework.</p>	<p>KEO1. Growing and developing strategic academic-industry relationships</p>	<p>On-going</p>

<p>Harnessing the power of social media/ digital reputation/ profiling.</p> <p>KPI – REF, TEF and KEF performance alongside increase in CRM contacts and those events and leads which result in tangible partnerships with cash or in-kind value.</p>				
<p><b>Engage and develop our enterprising academics:</b> Continue to build on our new “Enterprising Research” and “Spinout Basecamp” programmes that were developed for 2020/21 to engage, inspire and develop both entrepreneurial academics and spinout candidate teams. Engagement activities will also be in collaboration across the institution, to ensure that we optimise the overlap in engagement of both academic staff and their students.</p>	<p>HEIF supports these activities primarily through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 x 100% FTEs</li> <li>- Funding for proof of concept activities (up to c. £200k pa) and other occasional expert support</li> <li>- Subscriptions to relevant databases / commercialisation tools</li> <li>- Funding to UoBE Limited to support development, management, and hosting of engagement, training, and business incubation activities</li> </ul>	<p>Support the development of ideas and technologies that will shape the UK’s future high-growth, sustainable and secure economy.</p>	<p>KEO2. Accelerating academic enterprise</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Undertake Commercial Proof of Concept activities:</b> through a mixture of our own research and through utility of external consultants (through our Enterprising Birmingham Fund) we will validate the commercial attractiveness of the University’s innovations and where appropriate, develop further exploitation/business plans to attract licensees, and investors.</p>		<p>Support the development of ideas and technologies that will shape the UK’s future high-growth, sustainable and secure economy.</p>	<p>KEO2. Accelerating academic enterprise</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Establishment and growth of spinout companies:</b> This involves: Identifying, leading, and developing Spinout Candidate Teams, using the BizzInn incubator as a base;</p>		<p>Support the development of ideas and technologies that will shape the UK’s</p>	<p>KEO2. Accelerating academic enterprise</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

developing credible business plans that attract the right management talent and investment; closely monitoring and supporting the University's portfolio of spinout companies through representation on boards, investor relations and management of the University's investments into spinouts.	<p>Match supported by a wider UoBE Limited team whose services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intellectual Property services</li> <li>- Academic Consultancy services</li> <li>- Equity Management</li> <li>- Management of the Birmingham Research Park assets</li> </ul>	future high-growth, sustainable and secure economy.		
<b>Continuous review and improvement of commercialisation processes and procedures:</b> Continue to review and refine our processes and procedures, as we receive feedback and anticipate internal and external change.		Support the development of ideas and technologies that will shape the UK's future high-growth, sustainable and secure economy.	KEO2. Accelerating academic enterprise	Ongoing
<b>Work with our regional stakeholders to further develop the ecosystem to improve access to investment, people, help &amp; advice:</b> In addition to advice and guidance to businesses within the University's ecosystem (primarily through BizzInn and BioHub activities), this will include continued collaboration with Minerva Birmingham and other regional stakeholders to help drive angel and other investor interest in the region.		Supports "SMEs", "access to finance", and "place" agendas in particular.  Also supports response to Covid-19 crisis and recovery.	KEO2. Accelerating academic enterprise	Ongoing
<b>Engaging students and graduates with business:</b>  Undertake external business engagement activity in order to deliver a suite of student and graduate internships aimed primarily, but not limited to, local SMEs and Arts and Cultural organisations. Engagement with regional organisations including GBSLEP will enable	<p>HEIF supports all these activities primarily through:</p> <p>4.8 FTEs</p> <p>Bursaries to students and graduates for internships, idea generation and start up</p>	Supports 'ideas' through business recovery and growth and 'people' through skill development and improved employability prospects.	KEO3. Development of student enterprise and skills	2021/22 and annually thereafter



businesses to offer opportunities for students and graduates to support business recovery and growth. Internships will be both physical (pre-Covid) and virtual in order to ensure accessibility of opportunity. Aim to provide 60 opportunities per year.	(schemes between (£500-1000 pp)).	OfS/RE objective for students to benefit (60 students per year) and economic benefit (60 businesses per year)		
<b>Provision of student, graduate and postgraduate entrepreneurial support and training:</b>  Deliver entrepreneurial support, training and development for students and graduates including knowledge commercialisation through student and graduate start-ups. Bursary target is 30 students per year. Engagement target is 350 students per year.  Deliver entrepreneurial skills training and development, including support for starting a business for Postgraduate Researchers. Engagement target is 200 students per year.		Supports 'business environment' through developing new start ups and 'people' through improved employability prospects.  OfS/RE objective for students and economic benefit (380 students per year)	KEO3. Development of student enterprise and skills	2021/22 and annually thereafter.
<b>Embedding knowledge exchange into the curriculum:</b>  Deliver knowledge exchange and external engagement in the curriculum as part of the Programme Framework for the Future (ProFF) which enables students to gain future-focused employability skills during their studies. This also forms part of the new institutional Employability Strategy and will contribute to of		Supports 'people' through improved employability prospects.  OfS/RE objective for students to benefit.	KEO3. Development of student enterprise and skills	2021/22 ongoing.

<p>a new Academic Toolkit to embed enterprise and employability into the curriculum.</p> <p>It is intended to create a new post, a 'Learning Technologist' to focus on developing online materials to support the curriculum, involving employer input design that also takes account of shifts in technology to develop employability skills (both hard and soft) for the future that can directly impact on business growth.</p>				
<p><b>Covid-19:</b> There may be requirements from time to time to support staff who are involved in key activities through the ongoing response to Covid-19. For example, we have previously needed to utilise HEIF Funding in preparation of labs to enable Covid research and to establish test facilities.</p>	TBC	Supports response to Covid-19 crisis and recovery.	Across all objectives	Ongoing
<p><b>Additional support:</b> Some or all of existing and/or new new posts may be additional funded as required to support the above and related activities, for example to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporting the leadership of KE, for example in ensuring an effective relationship / integration of synergistic activities under the University's Strategic Framework</li> <li>- Direct and assist in the development and monitoring of any proposed new internal KE success measures and our KEC priority actions</li> </ul>	TBC	Various – as appropriate	Across all objectives	To be confirmed during 2021/22

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assist with relevant public engagement activities for example through the new Exchange and other key initiatives / assets</li> </ul>				
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### 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)*

The activities are primarily **managed** through three business divisions of the University, according to objective:

KEO1. Growing and developing strategic academic-industry relationships: managed by the Business Engagement Team

KEO2. Accelerating academic enterprise: managed by the Enterprise Acceleration Team (and as part of the wider University of Birmingham Enterprise team)

KEO3. Development of student enterprise and skills: managed by Careers Network

In each case, **HEIF spending is managed** through a senior management team who meet regularly to discuss allocation and distribution of funding and regularly monitor actual expenditure to ensure this remains within budget. Spend requires approval of the area Director, or a nominee depending on activity/threshold. Use of allocations to hire new employees requires a business case to and approval of the Provost, PVC R&KT, and Finance Director of the University.

**Progress** is measured, **outcomes evaluated**, and **lessons learned** through various methods in each area, for example:

**The Business Engagement** team measure a number of key performance targets and indicators. The headline KPTs are

- research award and income capture resulting from direct industry partnerships and those where there has been a government leverage opportunity
- Number of new partnerships developed
- Number of existing partnerships grown
- Number of new academics engaged

Other KPIs include

- Tracking of Strategic and Key Partners which have growth potential
- Value of In-kind contributions from partners
- No of events and discovery days with partners
- Effort of BE team in terms of pipeline vs actual awards generated
- Sector trends and demand to inform strategic direction

Frequency – many of the above are tracked via the University's CRM, and local reports that are readily available. Others are at an institutional level via financial systems and external data benchmarks.

Progress against KPTs is reported to the University Research Committee, via an annual report.

**University of Birmingham Enterprise** measure commercialisation of academic research, such as academics engaged, training hours, invention disclosures, patents filed, license agreements signed, companies created, investment received by spinouts, and royalty/IP income received. There is also an annual check of FTEs employed by spinouts. Whilst much of the outcomes are longer term (such as licensors/spinouts successfully selling new products and services) the performance of our licensors and spinouts is closely monitored through relationship management and regular reporting. An [Enterprise Annual Review](#) is published each year to help track and publicise milestones and outcomes. Both the Senior Management Team, and the board of University of Birmingham Enterprise Limited review the progress of these activities, and are regularly engaged in discussions around lessons learned and improvements that may be required. The Annual Review is an agenda item for discussion at the University Research Committee, at the University Executive Board, and the Strategic Planning and Resources Committee of Council.

**Careers Network** measure student sign up and engagement numbers; employer engagement and participation (e.g. number of employers offering internships and/or their engagement in entrepreneurial activities); and academic engagement (e.g. number of

modules or programmes delivering enterprise and/or entrepreneurial learning, training and opportunities within the curriculum.)

Outcomes are evaluated through student feedback, e.g. via an automated Student Satisfaction Survey that enables students to provide a rating of 0-5 stars as well as the ability to provide qualitative data that is used to make future improvements. We also measure the number of new student and graduate start-ups and use this data to feed into the HE-BCI report. This also enables us to identify the learning from activities thus informing future activity and helping to gain an understanding of both the technical and softer skills students are developing as well as their increased awareness of career opportunity.

Outcomes and lessons learned are also evaluated from business and employer feedback e.g. in terms of number of students making applications to their internships and/or the level of satisfaction with working with our students and graduates. We also explore the outcomes on the businesses themselves. Academic feedback is obtained to understand the benefits of enterprise and entrepreneurial education and we apply an external business focus to ensure they contribute to the design of intra and extra-curricular activities.