

RE-P-2020-03-Annex B

University of Bedfordshire

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.

With the recent confirmation of Professor Rebecca Bunting as permanent Vice Chancellor, our 2021-2025 strategic plan is in consultation and development stages as this return is drafted and is not yet finalised. The central strategy will be supported by six delivery strategies including Research and Innovation (R&I). The R&I strategy will set out a clear vision for this area, with measurable objectives for University-led or enabled activity.

We view our KE activity through three lenses; (a) Government-led drivers (b) private sector/public and regional need and (c) internal capacity and expertise. Our guiding principles are to support the [economic and social development of our region](#), and to align our activity towards the issues arising in key SEMLEP sectors. This enables economic growth, societal improvements and public/third sector efficiencies. A key KE focus is on engagement with [employers](#) (we have the largest regional offer of higher and degree apprenticeship training) and growing private-sector R&D, which continually generates further KE opportunities, especially where such activity is primed through our involvement in successful [regional regeneration projects](#) and funded [sector and civic support programmes](#).

(a) Regional, National and International Drivers

1. We will continue to develop our role as an anchor institution for the region, recognising our civic responsibilities, our contribution to the communities in which we are located and the employment sectors we serve. Alongside our work in line with the UK place-based National Industrial Strategy, we will develop meaningful metrics to show the impact of our public and community engagement in the region, demonstrating that our unfunded engagements also generate civic and economic value. Similarly, other placed based drivers of great importance to the university include the OxCam economic Arc and more local drivers such as Luton, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire Council's inclusive economic growth strategies..

2. With a significant focus on [applied research](#) – rooted directly in real-world challenges in society, creating real impact and on government policy – we will continue to align our research and KE activities with the 2020 UK R&D Roadmap priorities of facilitating research and exploitation processes between applied research, experimental development and our communities of practice.
- (b) Private and Public Sector need – we will maximise our engagement through funded programmes, leverage private sector investment and continue to generate and cultivate longer-lasting R&I relationships.
3. Lack of specialist research infrastructure means that the University of Bedfordshire will struggle to compete nationally with larger institutions in terms of R&I impact in some key areas (e.g. we do not have a science park.etc). We will continue to develop a more formal approach to seeking and growing the depth and breadth of R&I relationships with particular partners and strategically develop a Key Partnerships system, following the pilot model of our [RENEW](#) Innovation Centre. This will likely include development at partner locations, in-house reciprocal arrangements for joint R&I staff working, shared equipment, joint supervision of industry-sponsored PhD's/Masters by Research and joint funded projects in several new areas of research.
 4. The needs of regional employers influence our research, KE, curriculum development (eg, industry panels, employer engagement events, placements) and hence, graduate employability. Our aim is to develop R&I (and teaching) links with the top 50 significant employers in the region, measured on an annual basis against an established scorecard that considers impact, income and client satisfaction.
- (c) Internal capacity.
5. We will increasingly align our KE practices to the principles and systemic methodologies outlined within the KE Concordat, and a significant part of our HEIF strategy will be focused on skills and human capital development. The University is in the process of appointing a PVC for Research and Innovation who will lead and develop KE as part of a professional career path, complementary to teaching and research careers. Our objective is to maximise the number of staff able/ skilled to undertake activity (one of the main predictors of an institutions KE success), measured by staff feedback and performance reviews. KE activity will become a noted activity within all employment and Performance Review practices, and we will build on our staff base through proactive engagement with the Office for Talent being set up as part of the UK R&D People and Culture Strategy.
 6. We are developing suitable models of reward, recognition and accountability for research and knowledge exchange that incentivise at department, research institute and individual levels to succeed and reinvest in that success. Our objective is to ensure that our [Research Institutes](#) are financially stable, that investment is possible outside current QR mechanisms, in areas that produce successful R&I activity, that staff are rewarded in relevant ways and given the time to develop new areas/partnerships that help KE to flourish.
 7. We understand the vital role of our students in delivering knowledge exchange, whilst also recognising that students themselves will benefit through enhanced employability prospects and improved links to industry. We will involve students in the KE agenda at every level of interface, from delivery of KE whilst studying to accessing relevant KE offerings when graduated.

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><i>All categories - Programme to support SMEs in our region to boost their online offering, export and growth potential through access to expert consultancy/ Continue to deliver on current and replacement ERDF Priority Axis 1 Innovation projects</i></p>	<p><i>0.6FTE HEIF-funded post in business partnerships and engagement</i></p>	<p><i>Supports ‘ideas’ pillar of IS, by enabling SME business growth” and the primary government Build Back Better objective of ensuring no region is left behind as we achieve greater economic prosperity.</i></p>	<p><i>Objective 1 - to develop our role as an anchor institution for the region...and the employment sectors we serve.</i></p> <p><i>Objective 2 - align our research and KE activities with the 2020 UK R&D Roadmap priorities</i></p> <p><i>Objective 3 - growing the depth and breadth of R&I</i></p> <p><i>Objective 4 - to develop R&I (and teaching) links with the top 50 significant employers in the region</i></p>	<p><i>2021-2023</i></p>
<p><i>Facilitating the research and exploitation process – Develop a formal engagement process with regional employers and R&D led organisations; create industry liaison groups for each Research Institute, with Terms of Reference, network aims etc. – to direct and focus institute themes, direct internal investment and overall RI structure to better reflect national and international business priorities.</i></p>	<p><i>Funding for one head of business post.</i></p>	<p><i>By enabling easier, deeper relationships and streamlining our research capacity toward the identified external needs, we will deliver on the levelling up pillar of the Build Back Better plan and the Place-making agenda of the R&D roadmap, INNOVATEUK and BEIS. This meets R&D roadmap/ BEIS focus on key sectors.</i></p>	<p><i>Objective 1 - to develop our role as an anchor institution for the region...and the employment sectors we serve.</i></p> <p><i>Objective 2 - align our research and KE activities with the 2020 UK R&D Roadmap priorities</i></p> <p><i>Objective 3 - growing the depth and breadth of R&I relationships with particular</i></p>	<p><i>Development – 2021-2022.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery 2022-2025</i></p>

		<p>Also delivers on the Ideas and Place Local Industrial Strategy vision of “harnessing the collective strength of the Arc’s research base – driving greater collaboration on science and research”</p> <p>Through the delivery phase, we expect 200 students to engage in placements or projects with these key relationships.</p>	<p>partners and strategically develop a Key Partnerships KE system</p> <p>Objective 4 - to develop R&I (and teaching) links with the top 50 significant employers in the region</p>	
<p>Facilitating the research and exploitation process – we will take the actions uncovered from our KE Concordat Gap Analysis, focussing first on skills and human capital development.</p>	<p>HEIF paying for 0.5FTE of a full time Funding Officer developing courses and systems to meet KE Concordat needs.</p>	<p>Alignment with the KE concordat will improve all elements of our R&KE activity. We will ensure people can access opportunities; our priority is in connecting people to opportunity, as outlined in Build Back Better.</p>	<p>This aligns with all 7 of our HEIF-related Research and KE objectives.</p> <p>This will link with the University’s People and Culture, Research and Innovation strategies, in development</p>	2021/2022
<p>Investigate and develop or procure systems which will Improve management information around linkages between grant application, projects, activities, equipment and facilities and publication, to improve compliance with funders’ and KEF requirements and enable earlier identification and tracking of eligible impact activities. This will also free up professional KE staff time currently spent on administrative duties</p> <p>(Linked) Supporting the community/public engagement – We will develop underlying systems of recording, reporting and impact assessment</p>	<p>Funding for 0.5FTE business development post, use HEIF funding for improvements to CRM systems and other KE activity delivery systems</p>	<p>By automating the recording and reporting of indicators such as jobs created, papers published, private sector leverage developed, we will be able to demonstrate our impact toward the main pillars of Build Back Better and improve knowledge of our impact across the board.</p> <p>Releasing staff from admin to front-line activity will better use</p>	<p>Objective 1 - develop our role as an anchor institution for the region</p> <p>Objective 5 - to maximise the number of staff able/ skilled to undertake activity</p> <p>Objective 6 - to ensure that our Research Institutes are financially stable and that Research and Knowledge Exchange active staff are incentivised to succeed</p>	2021-2022

<p>through building new elements of CRM system, self-update portal etc.</p>		<p>HEIF funding to directly achieve impact</p>		
<p>Facilitating the research and exploitation process – We will assist Research Institutes to produce annual Income Generation Plans with additional income to be reinvested into suitable R&I areas within the Institute. We will develop new RI targets based on numbers of staff, numbers of professors (as part of selection and appointment criteria, income generation is treated as a core capability) and a weighted element to account for research themes that attract more income.</p>	<p>The new PVC R&I will use funds to reward and recognise KE activity where appropriate</p>	<p>Supports govt Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. This will align RIs with areas most in demand in government planning and strategies.</p> <p>Delivering the Build Back Better aim to work with local institutions to invest in local priorities to support the local economy & improve quality of life.</p> <p>Directing our R&KE activities toward the priority sectors outlined in R&D roadmap/ Build Back Better/ NIS etc.</p>	<p>Objective 6 - to ensure that our Research Institutes are financially stable and that Research and Knowledge Exchange active staff are incentivised to succeed</p>	<p>2021-2022</p>
<p>Commercialisation (technology transfer) - As a member of the Arc Universities Group, we are committed to working with government, business and other partners, to maximise the potential in this region of economic significance for sustainable and green growth, by supporting entrepreneurship, and working in collaboration with key strategic partners. Through membership of the Arc Universities Group, we will collaboratively deliver programmes of spinout entrepreneurship and investment, creating a step change in new spinout companies over 5 years.</p>	<p>1 Project Manager HEIF funded</p>	<p>Delivering the Innovation pillar of Build Back Better and the SEMLEP inward investment plans identified in the Local Industrial Strategy/ mirroring the National Industrial Strategy. The Arc is a Budget2021 Speed Pilot and our core involvement facilitates its immediate growth and impact.</p> <p>Helping solve the problem identified in the UK Research and Development Roadmap – “Opportunities to transition between academia, industry</p>	<p>Objective 1 - to develop our role as an anchor institution for the region...and the employment sectors we serve.</p> <p>Objective 2 - – we will continue to align our research and KE activities with the 2020 UK R&D Roadmap priorities of facilitating research and exploitation processes between applied research, experimental development and our communities of practice.</p>	<p>2022-2025</p>

		<i>and other roles are unclear or unavailable</i>		
<i>Knowledge sharing and diffusion – we will create programmes of student training, employability and engagement in KE – including shadowing and mentoring of professional KE staff and shadowing and membership of KE delivery teams.</i>	<i>Costs of setting up monitoring systems for recruiting, volunteering, mentorship etc. Some short contracts for student employment.</i>	<i>Delivering the SEMLEP industrial “People” strategy to ensure employer-led development of the talent pipeline and promote all relevant pathways based on employer needs. Linking this to our KE activities delivers on the priority focus on the development of digital and STEM skills. We expect this to reach at least 80 students per year.</i>	<i>Objective 7 - We will involve students in the KE agenda at every level of interface, from delivery of R&KE whilst studying to accessing R&KE when graduated.</i>	<i>2021-2025</i>
<i>Supporting the community/public engagement AND Knowledge sharing and diffusion - We will build systems to provide better visibility of current research and other scholarly activity, both internally and externally. We will roll these out through externally conducted evaluations of socioeconomic impact.</i>	<i>System development and upgrades Commissioning of socio-economic impact report</i>	<i>Delivering the Build Back Better levelling up agenda of “Economic, social, and cultural regeneration of struggling towns.”</i>	<i>Objective 1 - develop our role as an anchor institution for the region Objective 5 - skills and human capital development</i>	<i>2022-ongoing</i>
<i>Enterprise and entrepreneurship – Programme of startup innovation support specifically around new products, processes and services requiring innovation.</i>	<i>1 business development post 50% HEIF funded</i>	<i>Build Back Better states that jobs are the key economic priority, so we will create SMEs that will in turn create new jobs ... boosting growth in our regional cities and driving up prosperity. This will involve ~70 students</i>	<i>Objective 7 - We will involve students in the KE agenda at every level of interface, from delivery of R&KE whilst studying to accessing R&KE when graduated. Objective 5 - skills and human capital development</i>	<i>2022-2025 - To engage 250 on the programme by 2025.</i>
<i>Work with Local Authorities on inward investment, leveraging UK Community Renewal/ Shared Prosperity Fund resources where appropriate, to deliver programmes of skills to SMEs in relevant authority areas. Build on the striking success of our</i>	<i>Using HEIF for 50% funding for 1FTE CPD and short courses post</i>	<i>Delivering on the People agenda and the Build Back Better agenda to continue to focus on the quality of apprenticeships and improve</i>	<i>Objective 4 - to develop R&I (and teaching) links with the top 50 significant employers in the region</i>	<i>2023-2025</i>

<p><i>employer-driven apprenticeship and short course programmes in management, digital skills and organisational productivity, providing a fully integrated and easily navigated range of higher skills training to suit all commitment levels and employer sizes and sectors in SEM and neighbouring regions.</i></p>		<p><i>the apprenticeship system for employers</i></p>	<p><i>Objective 5 - skills and human capital development</i></p>	
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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.

To manage our HEIF spending:

All HEIF-related spend is directed, maintained & monitored through a single Innovation and Enterprise Service, using standard TRAC accounting procedures and the Agresso Project Management system. Items of HEIF income & expenditure are also subject to our project-defined workflow system. All salaried costs are based on actual costs, and where resources are shared across other funded areas, these are calculated through the use of hourly rate calculators and timesheets, detailing the time spent on other projects and on any other activity.

We manage all of our HEIF spending to ensure we build an efficient, effective and sustainable research and development system, in line with the priorities of BEIS and Research England.

Measuring progress

At the time of writing, we are devising an Action Plan as part of our commitment to the KE Concordat, defining a number of KPIs for each area of R&KE activity. These KPIs are all quantitative, where relevant they focus on the HEBCIS and Graduate Outcomes related datasets, and a baseline will be taken at the end of 2020/21 AY to work from.

Our primary objective, in keeping with the levelling up pillar of the Build Back Better plan, is to cement our place as an anchor institution in the region. From membership of the Arc Universities Group to our VC sitting on the SEMLEP board, from our co-development

of the Local Industrial Strategy to our involvement with the Luton Inclusive Growth Commission, we will continue to support the social and economic growth of our locale..

This help us to deliver on the PLACE agenda of R&D Roadmap, but also defines our value in terms of local and regional jobs, skills, public sector focus, charity support, volunteering and other civic contributions. Therefore, we will continue to shape and contribute to skills and employability strategies in the region and with the local authorities. This entails the design and development of meaningful metrics from the outset, which will happen in conjunction with the development of our central and sub university strategies.

The PEOPLE agenda is central to our objectives 4,6 and 7 outlined previously. Alongside graduate entrepreneurial success, in line with HEIF priorities and those of the OfS, we will quantify the volume and role of students in delivering knowledge exchange. We will track the effect of this on employability prospects against our general student population. We will quantify the links with the top 50 employers in the region (eg employer panels, income, no of events) and measure how many of our staff and students interact with these companies – on innovation and ideas, through employment, on funded projects or on collaborative R&D. We will monitor the number of academics and students involved in KE, the breadth and depth of each interaction, and the feedback from each interaction and also monitor staff feedback and integrate this activity into annual performance reviews to standardise across the institution. We will implement metrics as defined by the prospective Office for Talent as part of the UK R&D People and Culture Strategy, including a standardised measure of all scholarly activity, and we will incentivise individuals to succeed and reinvest in that success, so we will measure the number of rewards, awards and incentives applied for/ won.

Through delivering our second and third objectives, and in line with the Innovation pillar of the Build Back Better plan and the IDEAS pillar of the NIS, we will measure the quantity, breadth and value of our R&KE relationships against the 2020 UK R&D Roadmap priorities. We will do this by quantifying;

- our effect on incentivising private leverage toward the 2.4% of GDP into R&D target,
- the number and type of innovations introduced to each company and to the market,
- the number of new key partnerships involving in-company/ in-house reciprocal arrangements leading to fully funded R&KE,
- the number, survival and success of start-ups and spinouts.
- our participation in collaboratively funded R&D,
- The number of co-authored publications and the number of these reaching the public domain in the region.

Although the initial work of objective 5 to build our capacity and upskill our staff is primarily internally facing, it is being carried out to align with the external drivers of the KE Concordat, which in turn ensures better quality, faster and easier R&KE between academia and public/ private sector. Similarly, we run a Post-Award Research Bid Support process, which monitors progress of projects against KPIs and specifically looks at the impact of each project on various socio-economic levels.

Evaluating outcomes

We do not specifically mention crosscutting themes or sectorial topics such as climate change, biodiversity and Covid in this document. We believe that the evaluation of our impact and the outcomes of our work should be relevant to those major topics if the external needs of the international and national communities lead us. Therefore, we will measure our outcomes in quantifiable, tangible terms such as the numbers of climate-impacting policies affected. We measure outputs, and we evaluate outcomes in narrative form as part of our Post Award Project Management. This goes beyond just the KPIs set out during delivery and looks into the true impact and the incidental outcomes that contribute to the holistic growth of the University (e.g. policy impact, contribution to REF/ KEF, papers published, employability improvements).

As our previous Socio-economic impact assessment showed, outcomes of all the engagements carried out by the University leave a significant footprint in the region – every £1 spent on R&KE with us generates £6.50 in additional GVA, so this is the starting point from which we will evaluate from in future. When we evaluate our impact, we also go beyond the metrics of KEF to look at the value-generated per-academic-FTE; this provides our academics with a measure of effectiveness, efficiency and their own academic productivity. Our HEBCIS derived metrics show that our academics are generating more jobs and more GVA per head than those at the majority of UK HEIs.

We will repeat the external impact assessment exercise in future years, and in the meantime every R&KE project will, from 2022, routinely measure indicators of importance such as private leverage, jobs created and new products created, whether that project is funded research, collaborative knowledge exchange or unfunded civic or public engagement.

Identifying lessons learned

As well as the central Innovation and Enterprise project monitoring, each department reports annually to Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group against an operating plan which has been evaluated against University strategy. In the case of the Innovation and Enterprise Service, this also incorporates the HEIF strategy.

The KE Concordat is proving a useful exercise in helping create standardised systems of feedback, metrics for performance and systems of improvement. The outcomes of the KE Concordat Gap Analysis and Action Plan will provide a framework for automating these processes and for disseminating lessons learned on a regular basis.

These will feed back into our Professional Practitioner training series which is reviewed every 3 months in light of new government priorities, new guidance and new macro-level factors.