



Research
England

Office for
Students



RE-P-2020-03-Annex B

University of Sheffield

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

Queries to: KEPolicy@re.ukri.org

Web: <http://re.ukri.org>

Twitter: [@ResEngland](https://twitter.com/ResEngland)

Email: [Subscribe to email alerts](#)

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 Sheffield published its new [5-year Vision](#) in November 2020, setting out our strategy, values and priorities. Underpinning this vision are four pillars: research, innovation, education and one university.

Putting innovation as an explicit priority - alongside research and education - reflects the strong and increasing appetite across our institution for a greater emphasis on driving innovation through knowledge exchange (KE). Our vision sets out our intention to increase our innovation and KE activities, such as on impact (in its broadest sense), commercialisation and the University's contribution to economic prosperity, health and well-being, sustainability and the culture of our international, national and regional communities.

HEIF will be central to achieving this and our stated priorities for innovation and KE:

1. [Impact, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange](#): our research and education will have the maximum possible positive impact upon society, from the local to the global.
2. [The Advanced Manufacturing Group \(AMG\)](#): the AMG includes the University's AMRC, Nuclear AMRC, and AMRC training Centre. It will increase collaborative activity with the

University's academic community, as well as broadening its external partnerships with a clear focus on maximum benefit for those partners. The footprint of the AMG will expand into new areas of the country.

3. [Regional Engagement](#): working collaboratively with partners, we will increase and enhance the University's leadership role in the region. With a clear focus on sustainable development, we will improve health outcomes, productivity and cultural vibrancy in the region, delivering with a focus on infrastructure, skills and talent development and retention in the region.

Underpinning the above priorities are three work programmes, with the first and third being a particular focus for HEIF investment and which will be informed by our [KEF metrics](#) and self-assessment against the KE Concordat.

The impact, innovation and KE work programme consists of 17 projects that will deliver improvements in our:

- Leadership and governance of KE.
- Awareness of KE - drawing on best practice from within and outside the university, and developing our understanding of the value that the University of Sheffield can bring to our partners and communities.
- Policies, processes and structures for supporting KE activity - ensuring a clear and consistent approach that is easy for colleagues to navigate.
- Allocation of funding and KE professionals to institutional priorities - drawing on lessons learned and KEF metrics.

The regional engagement work programme has been designed with regional partners from the public, private, community and education sectors - with the aim of delivering against mutual regional and University ambitions. It focuses on the following eight areas:

- Delivering innovation to improve productivity.
- Improving the region's health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Enhancing cultural vibrancy.
- Sustainable development of the region.
- Enhancing the infrastructure and physical environment of the city and region.
- Improving talent development and retention.
- Supporting social inclusion and community capacity building.
- The University as a role model employer, procurer, broker and trusted civic partner.

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)*

Planned areas of HEIF supported KE activity Please provide an overview of planned KE activities or projects that will be supported by your 2021-22 and onwards HEIF allocations.	HEIF support How HEIF will be used to support the project?	HEIF priorities How does this relate to govt priorities and RE-OfS strategic objectives? (Including note of scale where student benefits are achieved.)	Strategic objectives Which institutional strategic KE objective does this relate to?	Indication of timescales
<p><i>Example response – delete from your completed return</i></p> <p><i>Programme to support SMEs in our region to boost their productivity through access to consultancy equipment and students. Target to engage 200 over 3 years.</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. x1 business development post 50% HEIF funded</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. “supports ‘ideas’ pillar of IS, by enabling SME business growth” and “RE/OfS objective for students to benefit, anticipate circa 200 students will be directly involved”...</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. “Objective 3: work with regional business to boost productivity and prosperity in our region”. Objective 4: graduate employability</i></p>	<p><i>e.g. ... 2019-20 onwards</i></p>
<p>Overarching KE governance structures and implementation of our KE work programme, which is delivering 17 discrete workstreams to improve our innovation and KE performance (e.g. as measured by the KEF, REF and TEF) and responds to our self-assessment under the KE Concordat.</p> <p>Includes support functions and projects that build on prior investments e.g. improvements to how we support and achieve policy impact.</p>	<p>Supports a team of ~12 staff, including programme delivery leads and senior staff time, and an operational budget (~£100k with leverage to be confirmed, but this programme of work will be supported by a significant number of non-HEIF funded staff).</p>	<p>Supports improvements in our performance as measured by the KE Framework and as identified through our self-assessment under the KE Concordat.</p>	<p>The University of Sheffield (UoS) Vision Innovation Pillar Impact Priority (all objectives)</p>	<p>Governance: ongoing</p> <p>Work programme: 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24</p>

<p>Provision of KE professionals to facilitate academic engagement with external partners and to manage strategic partnerships, and the better integration of these professionals across the university to improve knowledge sharing and performance. This team is supported with a KE and partnerships management information system and related subscriptions.</p>	<p>Supports a team of KE professionals that operate across all faculties, plus operational costs. This represents our second largest (~20%) HEIF investment.</p> <p>The University is currently mapping other KE support roles that are not HEIF funded in order to determine the value of these roles. This will be completed as part of the KE work programme as detailed in the row above.</p>	<p>Supports the UK's R&D Roadmap priority to become world-class at securing the economic and social benefits from research.</p> <p>Builds on and mainstreams our RE-funded work to link our academic research with international, national and local policy challenges.</p>	<p>UoS Vision Innovation Pillar Impact Priority (all objectives)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Delivery of a work programme to enhance our engagement and impact in the Sheffield City Region, including the city's social and creative vibrancy, alongside broader engagement with local business and government partners to support economic development and local policy priorities.</p>	<p>Supports a team of 5-6 staff (within a larger team that is funded from other budgets), plus an operational budget of ~£500k e.g. to deliver our programme of festivals and events.</p>	<p>Supports the UK's R&D Roadmap priority to ensure our R&D systems make their fullest contribution to our levelling up agenda.</p>	<p>UoS Vision Innovation Pillar SCR Priority (all objectives)</p>	<p>Now to 2025</p>

<p>Development of our entrepreneurship and commercialisation services, including support for start-up and licensing opportunities such as through Northern Gritstone Ltd and our Intellectual Property Development and Commercialisation Fund, and related activities that support our impact agenda.</p>	<p>Supports a team of 15-20 staff, plus an operational budget of ~£500k e.g. to provide start-up equity.</p> <p>This represents our largest (25-30%) HEIF investment and our contribution to the commercialisation fund attracts c.£800k from core budgets to support the development of our commercialisation pipeline.</p>	<p>Supports the UK's R&D Roadmap priority to support entrepreneurs and start-ups, and to attract, retain and develop diverse people and teams.</p> <p>Supports RE-OfS priority for students to benefit from HEIF. For example, we anticipate engaging ~500 students and recent graduates p.a. through our entrepreneurship service.</p>	<p>UoS Vision Innovation Pillar Impact Priority</p> <p>Five objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed KE and impact. • Develop a portfolio of high-quality impact activity in every academic department. • Maintain a pipeline of high-quality impact activities. • Develop and enhance our translational mechanisms. • Establish and support a University-wide flexible knowledge exchange and impact support system. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
---	--	---	--	----------------

<p>Delivery of our placement and employer-led services to undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students - to aid graduate market awareness, inform career decisions and help students engage with KE and impact.</p> <p>Plus wider employability initiatives - including employer input into our curriculum, the promotion of employer-led events (321 in 2020/21) and hosting of employer-led events for students (145 in 2020/21).</p>	<p>Supports 70% of the resource dedicated towards employer engagement and placements activity (including the RISE programme), with the remaining 30% being leveraged from wider budgets.</p>	<p>Supports RE-OfS priority for students to benefit from HEIF.</p> <p>We expect this activity to generate ~800 graduate job and placement vacancy advertisements each year for Sheffield students and graduates.</p> <p>We also expect to significantly increase the number of students on year-long placements (62 were supported through HEIF funded activity in 2020/21) or involved in shorter, work-related learning that contributes to KE and impact (over 100 supported through</p>	<p>UoS Vision Education and Research Pillars PGR Students Priority</p> <p>One objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion the value of innovation, KE and research impact. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
---	--	---	--	----------------

		HEIF funded activity in 2020/21).		
Investment in academic KE projects, as identified through our internal allocation and competition systems. This includes using HEIF to leverage other funds to maximise the impact of our research with external partners and support student KE, as well as encourage students to engage with KE.	<p>Direct investments (~£500k) in academic KE activity, including this student KE project.</p> <p>These HEIF funds contribute to a larger pot of KE funding that is made up of a suite of Impact Acceleration Accounts (BBSRC (£100k p.a.), EPSRC (c.£700k p.a.), ESRC (c.£250k p.a.), STFC (c.£50k p.a.) & MRC CinC c.£300k p.a.) and other KE funds that we secure such as via Connecting Capability Fund.</p>	<p>Supports the UK's R&D Roadmap priority to become world-class at securing the economic and social benefits from research.</p> <p>Funding will only be allocated to effective performers, reflecting the RE-OfS priority (HEIF Policies and Priorities 2020-21 to 2024-25)</p>	<p>UoS Vision Innovation Pillar Impact Priority</p> <p>Four objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed KE and impact. • Develop a portfolio of high-quality impact activity in every Department. • Maintain a pipeline of high-quality impact activities. • Grow collaboration with partners from beyond the University. 	Ongoing

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)

Our HEIF investments are managed by a dedicated team using robust financial and assurance systems (e.g. SAP software), with overall accountability held by our Vice President for Innovation (VPI) and our Director of Partnerships and Regional Engagement.

Each year (between March and May), the Partnerships and Regional Engagement team perform an evaluation of all HEIF investments in order to present a series of recommendations to the VPI via an Innovation Cabinet meeting as to how the following year's HEIF budget can be invested to greatest effect. This evaluation involves engagement from KE leads from each of our five Faculties in order to review existing commitments and to identify new opportunities for advancing KE. HEIF allocations for the following year are confirmed and all relevant budget holders notified before the end of June each year.

The annual allocation of HEIF also includes a budget that is ringfenced to support 'responsive mode' requests, which are allocated in year to support a wide range of KE activities. These response mode allocations are identified, approved, monitored and evaluated through a four stage process:

- **Stage 1: proposal development** - where dedicated KE professionals work with principal investigators to develop their proposed KE activities and identify how HEIF can support them. Proposals only proceed for consideration upon agreement of a KE professional after consideration of available funds.

- **Stage 2: Proposal assessment** - all proposals are reviewed and either approved for support, or redirected for further development by an appropriate review panel (the composition of which depends on the nature of the proposals being received to ensure a high level of understanding for the projects being put forward).
- **Stage 3: award set up** - upon receipt of an approved proposal for KE funds, the central KE delivery team will issue a conditional offer of financial support. Typical conditions that must be met before release of funds include:
 - Project and partner details, including the terms of any planned collaboration agreement and any necessary detail to allow due diligence checks to be undertaken.
 - Acceptance by all partners to our standard terms and conditions for KE funds (which includes dissemination of non-confidential aspects of the project), or a bespoke agreement that is negotiated by the University's contracts team.
 - A project costing that has been approved by the relevant Head of Department and central pricing team. This process is managed through the university's Costing and Awards Tool.
 - Submission of key supporting documents e.g. letters of support from project partners, a schedule of spend and/or state aid declarations (confirming that the use of state resources is allowable).
- **Stage 4: award confirmation** - where a financial account is established and formal offer letter sent to the PI, setting out conditions of the award. All approved projects are recorded in our Salesforce CRM system, used by multiple teams to manage partnership activity and provide a university-wide perspective on our external relationships.
- **Stage 5: monitoring and reporting** - where projects are allocated a dedicated monitoring officer in the central KE team, who oversees project progress but also provides advice on how to maximise impact. Financial risks relating to the overall fund are managed through monthly budget meetings, with funds being recovered where there is evidence of substantial underperformance. Final reports are submitted by PIs within 30 days of the project end date, which are used to identify future impact opportunities and report up to Research England.

To ensure continuous improvement in our monitoring of KE activities, and in line with our strategy to improve our innovation and KE performance outlined in question 1, we are also reviewing how we oversee KE at an institutional level and how we ensure a robust role for our governing bodies. Clearer links are being established between institutional

and faculty KE leadership, and we will work closely with senior academics to drive improvements in our KE activity and ensure that KE funds are invested in institutional priorities.

Our approach to evaluation is being strengthened as part of our programme of improvements, which will ensure our approach to KE is assessed on a regular basis and in line with the university's 5-year vision, with lessons (and best practice) identified and acted upon by KE leaders across the institution.

To embed planning and evaluation within faculties and departments, we have also developed a new strategic planning framework, which expands on the vision pillars and provides an outline of the key areas of focus. We have asked faculties and departments to use this framework to set out what they want to achieve over the next five years, including on KE, using a range of measures to evaluate performance and monitor progress.