



RE-P-2020-03-Annex B

The Open 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 Open University (OU) is the largest academic institution in the UK and a world leader in flexible learning. We are unique among UK universities in combining a mission to widen access to higher education with research excellence. Our research underpins the teaching we deliver to almost 170,000 students. It informs the high-quality free open educational resources we provide to learners worldwide and feeds into the TV and radio programmes we make with our partner the BBC, which reach an audience of 40 million viewers annually.

Research and Enterprise Plan

Research and knowledge exchange (KE) are fundamental to the OUs founding principle: to be 'open to people, places, methods and ideas'. These principals are embedded in our Research and Enterprise (R&E) Plan: 2018-23. The R&E Plan sets out the OU's strategy to increase the scale and impact of our research and enterprise through building a distinctive capacity in engaged research, including enhanced KE activities with businesses, policy makers, practitioners and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the R&E

Plan reinforces the University's agenda to achieve positive impacts upon society, culture and the economy across the four nations of the UK and beyond through utilising the expertise, resources and local knowledge of our nation offices in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh as well as regional offices in England. The R&E Plan comprises five overarching objectives, of which two are directly related to KE:

- Objective 2: Build our capacity in distinctive engaged, open research through increased and widened public and stakeholder engagement with OU research
- Objective 3: Develop the number and significance of our large-scale, external research and doctoral training partnerships so as to maximise access to funding, support KE and the KEF and further enhance our own research

Knowledge Exchange Strategy

The KE Strategy supports the delivery of KE related objectives in the R&E Plan and capitalises on the OUs unique position as the UKs only four nations university. The strategy comprises five objectives, the last of which provides strategic focus for the OUs long-term response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The objectives of the KE Strategy along with the priority areas for each objective are as follows:

Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to develop KE

- i. Embed KE as a core activity across all faculties and institutes
- ii. Implement processes and procedures to enable academic and research staff to engage with, and be rewarded for, KE activities
- iii. Provide academics and researchers engaging in KE with a high level of support from faculty and professional support units
- iv. Increase the number of academics and researchers involved in KE through support of under-represented groups
- v. Provide KE training to upskill academics, researchers, and support staff

Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise

- i. Communicate the value of research intellectual property for use in institutional reporting and income generation (REF, KEF and HE-BCI) to all staff
- ii. Develop a long-term strategic approach to allocate KE funds to areas of strength and those supporting key government strategies
- iii. Continue to increase and diversify income from research IP
- iv. Increase the number of commercial and non-commercial research and KE partners
- v. Enhance support for student entrepreneurs

Objective 3: To enable prosperity in communities

i. Create realistic services to solve societal challenges and drive prosperity

- ii. Embed a four nations approach to deliver high impact of KE across the UK
- iii. Engage strategically with the development of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

Objective 4: To deliver impactful public and policy engagement

- Develop pathways to policy makers across all four Nations to ensure OU research influences local and national policy
- ii. Embed the principals of engaged research to ensure meaningful engagement with the public and policymakers at all stages of research

Objective 5: To support societies recovering from COVID-19

- i. Provide resources to upskill communities across the four nations, ensuring the inclusion of marginalised groups
- ii. Continue to support our three core COVID-19 response activities (online learning and education, health and wellbeing, and inequalities)
- iii. Develop partnerships with organisations in the public and private sector to ensure impact of our core and wider coronavirus response activities across the four nations
- iv. Apply OUs expertise in digital technologies to support new ways of working

Question 2 - Use of HEIF

How do you intend to use your 2021-22 to 24-25 HEIF allocations?

As detailed in <u>RE-CL-2020-04</u> 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
 Stimulate growth in KE across the OU through incentivisation, efficient support services and improved policies and procedures. Key activities: Develop capacity and capabilities in support units to facilitate KE Revise consultancy policy to incentivise uptake of university-based consultancy Promote KE as a route to career progression and ensure appropriate rewards Increase engagement of underrepresented groups in KE activities Target: to increase number of academics involved in KE activities by 50% over four years. 	HEIF co-funded activity - Staff (0.4FTE) from HEIF	Supports the 'Inspiring and enabling talented people and teams' strand of the R&D Roadmap and the Experience objective of the OfS strategy by creating an inclusive and efficient environment for KE for students, academics and researchers.	KE Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to develop KE (Priorities: i, ii, iii, iv) KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact or our innovation and enterprise (Priority i)	2021-22 onwards
Programme to upskill academics, researchers, and support staff through the provision of high-quality KE training. Key activities:	HEIF co-funded activity - Staff (0.3FTE) from HEIF - HEIF funding for external training provision	Supports the 'Inspiring and enabling talented people and teams' strand of the R&D Roadmap and the 'Skills' pillar of the	KE Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to develop KE (Priorities: iii, iv, v)	2021-22 until 2023-24

 Programme of seminars and workshops delivered by internal and external trainers Embedding of KE expertise within the academic community through the development of a highly trained cohort of academics Support CPD of Research and Enterprise staff through training and engagement with professional organisations Target: 100 individuals trained, including 50 from under-represented groups per annum. 		Build Back Better plan by increasing the skills base of academics, researchers and KE professionals.	KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact or our innovation and enterprise (Priorities i, v) KE Objective 4: To deliver impactful public and policy engagement (Priorities i, ii)	
 3. Establish and deliver KE innovators initiative to increase the number of early career researchers and those from under-represented groups participating in KE activities Key activities: Increase knowledge and skills through mentoring and attendance on intensive training schemes Provision of funds to support KE projects (e.g. increasing the TRL of intellectual property) and development of new partnerships Funds to support secondments and attendance at networking events Target: Cohort of 6 academics undertake scheme per annum. 	HEIF co-funded activity - Staff (0.2FTE) from HEIF - HEIF funding for networking and secondment	Supports the 'Inspiring and enabling talented people and teams' strand of the R&D Roadmap by embedding KE within the skills set of the next generation of research leaders.	KE Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to develop KE (Priorities i, ii, iii, iv, v) KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priority i)	2021-22 until 2024-2025
4. Support the operations of the central Research and Enterprise (R&E) office to ensure continued delivery of a high-quality	HEIF co-funded activity - Staff (1.4FTE) from HEIF	Supports the 'Ensuring a healthy R&D system' and 'Driving up innovation,	KE Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to	2021-22 until 2024-2025

service to the academic community through the provision of staffing and resources. Key activities: Provision of funds to ensure that the R&E office has the capacity and expertise to manage, protect and exploit research intellectual property and deliver wider business development activities across the university Equip the R&E office with IT packages required to effectively manage and report intellectual property and business development activities Provision of funding to enable the R&E office to increase its capacity to deliver an efficient service through accessing support from specialist organisations Target: Income from commercialisation of OU IP and expertise increased by 50% resulting in an improvement in two KEF metrics (IP and commercialisation; working with business) over four years.	- HEIF funding for commercialisation support, software, patent management	and productivity' strands of the R&D Roadmap, the 'Innovation' pillar of the Build Back Better plan and the Experience objective of the OfS strategy by providing an infrastructure and resources to catalyse the delivery of KE with businesses and other external organisations and support student entrepreneurship.	develop KE (Priorities: i, iii, v) KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priorities: i, ii, iii, iv) KE Objective 3: To enable prosperity in communities (Priorities: i, ii, iii) KE Objective 5: To support societies recovering from COVID-19 (Priorities: ii, iii)	
 5. Collaborate with operations in the Nations and faculty offices to deliver KE activities across the four nations through provision of staffing and resources. Key activities: Coordinate and support KE activities of knowledge exchange managers across Nations 	HEIF co-funded activity Staff (0.4FTE) from HEIF	Supports the 'Levelling up R&D across the UK' and 'Driving up innovation and productivity' strands of the R&D Roadmap and the 'Innovation' pillar of the Build Back Better plan by enabling a	KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priorities: iii, iv) KE Objective 3: To enable prosperity in communities (Priorities: i, ii)	2021-22 until 2024-2025

Maximise impact of high potential KE opportunities through funding discipline specific knowledge exchange managers. Target: Nations targets for KE met over four years (Research Wales Innovation Fund, Scotland: University Innovation Fund; NI TBC)		four nations approach to KE.	KE Objective 5: To support societies recovering from COVID-19 (Priorities: i, ii, iii)	
 6. Programme to deliver a long-term strategic approach to KE through investment in selected themes aligned to key areas of strength. Key activities: Establish, support and project manage themes Create fund to support collaborative projects and wider KE activities Target: Three sectorial themes established and delivering against KPIs and resulting in an improvement in two KEF metrics (working with business; working with the public and third sector) over four years 	HEIF co-funded activity - Staff (0.6FTE) from HEIF - HEIF funding to deliver themes	Supports the 'Raising our research ambitions' strand of the R&D Roadmap, and the 'Innovation' pillar of the Build Back Better plan by focusing expertise and resources to create a step-change in key sectors.	KE Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to develop KE (Priority: iii) KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priorities: ii, iii, iv) KE Objective 3: To enable prosperity in communities (Priorities: i, ii, iii)	2021-22 until 2023-2024
7. Funding programme to increase KE activity, respond to commercial and societal challenges, and generate third-stream income through increasing engagement with businesses. Key activities: Knowledge Transfer Vouchers scheme focused on developing new partnerships Innovation Voucher scheme focused on collaborative projects that transfer	- Staff (0.8FTE) from HEIF - HEIF funding for voucher programmes	Supports the 'Driving up innovation and productivity' strand of the R&D Roadmap and the 'Innovation' pillar of the Build Back Better plan by increasing the level of engagement and innovation with businesses.	KE Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to develop KE (Priorities: ii, iii) KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priorities: iii, iv)	2021-22 until 2024-2025

research into innovations that solve commercial challenges Target: 30 new partnerships created resulting in improvement in two KEF metrics (working with business; working with the public and third sector) over four years. 8. Support OU wide activities to create realistic services to address societal challenges and drive prosperity through developing partnerships with external organisations across the four nations. Key activities: Increase engagement and partnerships with local and devolved governments, LEPs, HEIs, businesses and other public and private sector organisations Increase recognition of OU research and commercialisation thorough improved marketing of expertise and capabilities Support regional flagship initiatives, including the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Target: Improvement in two KEF metrics (working with business; working with the public and third sector) and remaining in top 10% of one metric (skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship) over four years.	HEIF co-funded activity - Staff (0.5FTE) from HEIF - HEIF funding for networking and engagement	Supports the 'Levelling up R&D across the UK' strand of the R&D Roadmap, and the 'Levelling-up' pillar of the Build Back Better plan by active engagement with stakeholders both regionally and across the four nations.	KE Objective 3: To enable prosperity in communities (Priorities: i, ii, iii) KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priorities: ii iii, iv) KE Objective 3: To enable prosperity in communities (Priorities: i, ii, iii) KE Objective 4: To deliver impactful public and policy engagement (Priorities i, ii) KE Objective 5: To support societies recovering from COVID-19 (Priorities: ii, iii, iv)	2021-22 until 2024-2025
 Student entrepreneurs Support delivery of the entrepreneurship strand of the OUs Student Employability Strategy Key activities: 	- Staff (1FTE) from HEIF - HEIF funding for internships and entrepreneurship initiatives	Supports the 'Inspiring and enabling talented people and teams' strand of the R&D Roadmap, the Welsh	KE Objective 1: To develop our culture and capacity to develop KE (Priorities: i, iii, iv, v)	2021-22 until 2024-2025

 Create Entrepreneurship Community of Practice amongst staff and students interested in entrepreneurship Establish student mentor programme with under-represented students as pilot group Provide funding for entrepreneurship initiatives Target: 10% increase in student start-ups over two years resulting in improvement in one KEF metric (skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship) over two years. 		Government's Prosperity for all: Economic Action Plan (EAP) and the Outcomes objective of the OfS strategy by enabling entrepreneurship and supporting the next generation of innovators.	KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priority: v)	
 10. Coordinate the OUs coronavirus response activities to support communities recovering from the pandemic through the application of OU expertise and resources. Key activities: Provide management oversight of the three core response activities (online learning and education, health and wellbeing, and inequalities) Provide KE support for each activity to drive engagement with organisations in the public and private sector across the four nations Target: Ten partnerships established that are delivering impact to communities resulting in improvement in two KEF metrics (working with the public and third sector; skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship) over two years. 	HEIF co-funded activity - Staff (0.2FTE) from HEIF	Supports the 'Levelling up R&D across the UK' strand of the R&D Roadmap and the 'Skills' pillar of the Build Back Better plan by applying expertise, knowledge and resources to targeted sectors and organisations across the four nations.	KE Objective 2: To maximise the impact of our innovation and enterprise (Priorities: iii, iv) KE Objective 3: To enable prosperity in communities (Priorities: i, ii) KE Objective 4: To deliver impactful public and policy engagement (Priority ii) KE Objective 5: To support societies recovering from COVID-19 (Priorities: i, ii, iii, iv)	2021-22 until 2022-2023

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.

Management of HEIF spending

The HEIF Accountability Statement has been approved at an institutional level by Research Committee and responsibility for operational oversight is delegated to the Research Board, who approve planned areas of spend.

The Research, Enterprise, and Scholarship (RES) Unit led by the PVC-RES will provide strategic oversight of the use of HEIF funding. The HEIF fund will be managed and administered at an operational level by the Research and Enterprise (R&E) office, with support from Finance and Business Services.

The R&E office will manage HEIF spend, allocating funds in line with annual spending plans and will ensure eligibility. For non-staff expenditure, a business case or proposal will need to be submitted for approval, evidencing alignment with the OU HEIF priorities. Where appropriate, the R&E office will convene expert panels to evaluate proposals and allocate funds on a competitive basis (e.g. for the voucher schemes).

The R&E office will monitor progress against objectives and collect data and case studies for internal monitoring, external reporting (HE-BCI survey, KEF, REF) and communication purposes. Research Board will be provided with an annual summary of progress.

Annual monitoring statements will be compiled by the R&E office with support from Finance and Business Services. After internal data checks it will be approved by Funding Body Group prior to submission to Research England.

Intellectual property (IP) created through HEIF activity will be managed by the R&E office in accordance with the OUs 'KE and Commercialisation Process'. This process provides

a structured route for identifying, assessing, protecting, and exploiting IP. A framework for the development of spinouts and social enterprises is in development and will be implemented shortly.

Ongoing KE support will be provided by the R&E office to ensure that short- and long-term impacts of HEIF activities are realised, and that evidence is collected for reporting purposes.

The OU is a registered charity and therefore HEIF spend will adhere to the terms of the Charities Act 2011 (regulated by OfS). HEIF spend and income derived from HEIF activities will also be subject to OU policies, including:

- The Research IP Policy sets out the OU's position on the ownership, development, protection and exploitation of IP. The IP Research Advisory Group, chaired by PVC-RES, has oversight and governance of IP derived from research.
- ii. The Consultancy Policy details the procedures and conditions under which university and private consultancy can be carried out.
- iii. The Recruitment, Selection and Employment Policy will apply to all staff employed using HEIF funds.
- iv. The Procurement Policy provides a governance structure for the University's Procurement Strategy and will apply to all purchases made using HEIF funds.

Measuring progress and evaluating outcomes

Quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to measure progress and evaluate the outcome of HEIF funded activities against KE strategic objectives during the course and upon completion of the funding period. Key parameters that will be measured and evaluated are summarised below:

- i. An annual demographic analysis of number of academics involved in KE activities will be carried out to assess engagement in KE activities and will be evaluated against sectorial averages and OU inclusivity targets. (KE Ob.1 & 4)
- ii. KPIs focused on service provision will be implemented across faculties and support units to measure progress in improving KE processes and procedures over time. (KE Ob.1)
- iii. The number of academics and KE professionals attending internal and external training sessions will be recorded along with feedback to determine the quality of the training provision. This data will be analysed to evaluate the impact of the training on the KE skills base across the OU. (KE Ob. 1)
- iv. Metrics aligned to HE-BCI survey and KEF will be measured annually to evaluate the success of strategically allocating HEIF funds to themes aligned to key areas of strength. (KE Ob. 2, 3 & 5)
- v. Income from KE activities including commercialisation of intellectual property, consultancy, and research collaborations along with the data on the number of

external partnerships will be reviewed annually to measure the quality of service provided by the R&E office and knowledge exchange managers across the faculties and nations. This data will be evaluated against OU five-year averages, faculty targets and against other HEIs within KEF cluster E. (KE Ob. 2, 3 & 5)

- vi. The number of new partnerships developed as result of the Knowledge Transfer Voucher and Innovation Fund will be used to measure the short-term success of the two schemes. The status of the partnerships between the OU and the external organisations will be reviewed one year after completion of the projects to evaluate the longer-term success of the two schemes. (KE Ob. 1, 2, 3 & 5)
- vii. The number of applications from early career researchers and researchers from under-represented groups to the KE Innovators scheme will be analysed to assess inclusivity. Questionnaires will be used to evaluate the immediate impact of the scheme on skills development and engagement with KE activities. The KE activities of attendees will be monitored for 3-years upon completion of the scheme to evaluate the longer-term impacts. (KE Ob. 1 & 2)
- viii. The number of student entrepreneurs engaged in activities managed by the R&E office will be assessed and questionnaires used to determine the quality of the service provided and gather feedback on how support could be improved. The data collected will be evaluated against previous levels of engagement and against KPIs that include indicators on participation from under-represented groups. (KE Ob. 1 & 2)
- ix. Metrics relevant to interactions between OU academics and government organisations, LEPs and other public sector organisations will be measured (e.g. policy engagement, flagship initiative supported) and evaluated against their impact on society. (KE Ob. 4)
- x. The OUs Library's Knowledge and Information Management system will be used to monitor KE activities and identify pathways for continued development of opportunities.

An annual report will be provided to Research Board summarising the progress. If sufficient progress is not being made, then recommendations to modify the plan will be proposed to Research Board for approval.

Identifying lessons learned

Monitoring of activity will enable the R&E office to identify both positive and negative lessons that will be used to drive continuous improvement both within and between activities and ensure value for money. A Lessons Learned Log (example shown in table 1) will be created for each of the ten activities described in Question 2 and will be used to identify and mange lessons learned.

The log will be maintained by the R&E office and populated with information from annual effectiveness reviews and data collected to measure progress and evaluate outcomes

which will form part of the annual report to Research Board. Where necessary lessons learned from some activities will need to be identified, logged, and acted upon immediately. In cases such as this it will be the responsibility of the activity lead to ensure that actions arising from the lessons learned are successfully implemented in a timely manner.

Activity	y:	Stimulate growth in KE across the OU					
Activit	y lead:	Head of Research and Enterprise					
Activit	y description:	Activities to incentivise KE	Activities to incentivise KE, provide efficient support services and improved policies and procedures				
ID	Date identified	Subject	Situation	Recommendation and Comments	Follow-up needed?		
1	xx/xx/xxxx	Headline describing the subject of the lessons learned.	A detailed description of the situation learned from.	Detailed description of the lessons learned from the situation. Describes the corrective actions taken and recommendations in regard to the corrective actions in order to guide future projects.	Description of actions needed.		
2							
3							

Table 1: Example of Lessons Learned Log (based on the template from PRINCE2)

A lessons-learned workshop will be run upon completion of an activity and focus upon three key questions: (i) what went right, (ii) what went wrong, and (iii) what needs to be improved. The outcome of the sessions will be documented and shared internally (e.g. KE Working Group) to support continuous improvement of KE activities across the OU.