University of Bristol

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
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 Bristol's mission is to '*make a positive impact locally and globally by addressing society's greatest challenges, through our distinctive education, innovative research, and the value we place on excellence, inclusivity, and partnership'*. Our vision includes an aspiration to be '*a truly global civic university, able to advance both the University and the city of Bristol through close collaboration and synergy, empowered by our sense of place and connections with communities*' (*University Strategy 2030*).

Knowledge Exchange (KE) is a core part of our Research, Innovation & Impact strategy: "*Accelerate our growing commercialisation, start-up and scale-up activities; and expand our research and innovation partnerships with universities, industries, businesses, government agencies and other innovation assets within the Bristol city-region, including Temple Quarter, the new Western Gateway, and beyond*". It is also recognised as a key pillar in our Academic Promotions Framework, which values contributions across three broad areas: co-producing, translating and applying knowledge; linking the University with society; and exchanging knowledge with the broader community.

Our HEIF plan's primary enabler is a central Research & Enterprise Division (RED) with a vision to '*be renowned as an enabling and partnering service for research and knowledge exchange*'. It is our desire, as a division and as a university, to work in partnership to address global challenges, not least in terms of post COVID-19 recovery, levelling up and Net Zero. Further, our ambitions are set in the context of the wider sector priorities, including the *R&D roadmap* and *Build Back Better: our plan for growth* as well as the West of England's Local Industrial Strategy. Given these challenges and strategies, and in the context of the recent KEF outcomes, our HEIF plan is based on three main aims:

1) Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture

1.1 <u>Joining up Entrepreneurship</u>: to maximise the impact of our innovation and enhance the diversity of our enterprise and entrepreneurship, through fostering an organisation-wide culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Here we will explore the role of students in delivering KE, including new company creation.

1.2 <u>Contracting</u>: to build upon the success of our contracts process transformation project, to further develop the service towards a shared understanding of contracting across the University and greater clarity on roles and responsibilities. If possible, there is the intention to grow the resources to further support contract research.

1.3 <u>Building value</u>: to align and focus our investments on people, services and infrastructure based upon established and emerging research strengths. These include social justice; resilience (social, economic, and physical infrastructure); environment & climate change; data & digital; health; and creative and cultural industries.

2) Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities

2.1 <u>Enablers</u>: to bring researchers and external partners together at the early stages of problem definition and research design, combining RED's role as a conduit with other enabling functions, such as our seven Specialist Research Institutes and five cross-disciplinary University Research Institutes, to deliver collaborative research programmes at scale.

2.2 <u>Business gateway</u>: to continue to develop our SME outreach and partnerships service, to offer an externally facing role that seeks to understand an external organisation's needs and broker a solution, whether it is innovation or skill focused, and to bring this together with the successful SETsquared Scale Up programme, which seeks to support fast growing businesses.

2.3 <u>Translational Research</u>: to enable growth in applied and translational research through building upon our successful model of 'translational research hubs' in the life and health sciences and extending to other Faculties; working with catapults and contract research organisations externally.

3) Aim 3: To capture, evaluate and promote successful knowledge exchange and impact

3.1 <u>Capturing insights</u>: to bring researchers together to share their disciplinary methods, data, and insights, to unlock new ways to tackle problems and to share best practice in developing and facilitating research impact.

3.2 <u>Evaluate and Learn</u>: to develop mechanisms for continuous improvement, and for evaluating performance, success, and sustainability. As a learning organisation, we will develop new ways through which external organisations as well as our academics can feed back and improve our services and activities. We will also implement a suite of KE performance indicators that can be embedded within faculties and RED, and which will be reported to our University Research Committee and University Executive Board, to ensure senior management has oversight of KE activities and performance (see Q3).

A recent independent evaluation of our KE culture and activities concluded that we needed to review our approach to student-led KE activities, with a focus on delivering employability benefits to students and enhancing our outreach for research collaboration (particularly to SMEs). This will be considered alongside a review of our employer-led education (non-credit bearing CPD), where there is the potential to focus developments on the place and levelling-up agenda, with research and skills coming together to support growth in key sectors and technology areas.

3.3. <u>Promote</u>: to develop a series of campaigns and events to engage organisations to understand their needs and showcase examples of how they can work with us. Part of this approach will be a new brand and market presence for the University called Bristol Innovations. The campaigns and branding will require a single web portal and recognition that KE is key to our reputation as a research-intensive university that wishes to achieve social and economic impact.

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.

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
Embedding knowledge exchange (KE) in the developing institutional strategy and culture, devising appropriate governance and oversight mechanisms. Establishing and refining critical business functions that underpin delivery of the institutional HEIF plan. Providing operational structures for HEIF delivery, developing policy and practice in relation to people, communications, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.	1.0 Executive Director 50% HEIF funded 2.0 Directors (Business and Civic Engagement; Research Contracts, Innovation and Governance) 0.3 Special (innovation) Advisor Support Systems and subscriptions	R&D Roadmap: Support for applied research, development and implementation; fostering collaboration and networks between researchers, external partners and civic leaders. HEIF priorities: Accountability, assurance, policy development, evaluation and rewards/ incentives.	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities Aim 3: To capture, evaluate and promote successful knowledge exchange and impact	2021 - onward
Maximising the impact of our innovation and enhancing the diversity of our enterprise and entrepreneurship - providing commercial and strategic leadership to the enterprise hub, maintaining strong links with business and civic organisations to facilitate strategic University activity focused on innovation, entrepreneurship and our part in supporting regional	14.4 Enterprise Services staff (Engine Shed, SETsquared) Entrepreneurs in Residence	R&D Roadmap: Support for entrepreneurs and start-ups; support for impact-focussed activities such as business incubation; capturing the economic and social benefit from research through improvements to innovation and knowledge exchange.	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture Aim 3: To capture, evaluate and promote successful knowledge exchange and impact	2021 - onward

economic growth; supporting staff and students wanting to establish and grow new enterprises or activities; developing seamless support for entrepreneurship, commercialisation and enterprise support services.		Role of 'place' in supporting innovation and productivity growth. Initiatives to increase the participation, retention and promotion of a diversity of talent into R&D.		
Programme of work to foster an organisation-wide culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, co-ordinating and catalysing existing entrepreneurship activities, and delivering an effective, continuous and scalable user-centric start-up solution for all staff and students.	6.8 Commercialisation staff 1.6 Intellectual Property management and support staff £125k p.a. Commercialisation and Development Fund Commercialisation Investments and Pump Priming £300k p.a. Patents and IP budget	R&D Roadmap: Strengthening the interactions between discovery research, applied research, innovation, commercialisation and deployment, accelerating the journey between concept and commercial application; support for entrepreneurs and start-ups. Initiatives to increase the participation, retention and promotion of a diversity of talent into R&D.	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture	2021 - onward
Programme of work to create an integrated approach to contracting and a seamless service for contract research and consultancy. Creation of formal arrangements for timely and efficient execution of research contracts, and mechanisms to monitor this to inform improved service delivery. This includes building relationships,	12.6 Contract Managers, Associates and Officers	R&D Roadmap: Fostering greater collaboration and networks between stakeholders to embed a system that delivers stronger local economic benefit and improved quality of life outcomes; implementing appropriate policies and incentives; enabling	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities	Ongoing

steering negotiations through to completion of an acceptable commercial arrangement, due diligence, and balancing risks and benefits to all parties.		effective collaboration and knowledge exchange.		
Engaging with the users of research and with the wider public - brokering partnerships with external organisations, publics and community organisations to accelerate collaboration and co-creation, KE and impact development, bringing researchers and research users together at the early stages of problem definition and research design.	4.7 Public Engagement staff	R&D Roadmap: 'Place' and 'Levelling up' – engaging with people and in places across the country, and with civic leaders, to inform our research agendas and our priorities, enabling us to build a better future after the COVID-19 crisis and deliver improved quality of life outcomes from R&D.	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities	Ongoing
Building relationships with external policy makers; leading and shaping the development of policy and practice in policy engagement, and providing advice on policy engagement to staff, bringing researchers and research users together at the early stages of problem definition and research design.	3.0 Policy Engagement staff	R&D Roadmap: Engaging with policy-makers to embed a system that delivers improved quality of life outcomes from R&D.	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities	Ongoing
Programme to identify, develop and manage relationships with the potential to contribute most to the university's strategic (research and enterprise) ambitions and strengths; establishing and overseeing	5.8 Programme Management staff	R&D Roadmap: Engaging with businesses to understand emerging priorities and needs, and areas of potential coordination and	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange	Ongoing

university-wide processes that support the development and growth of partnerships and collaborations; developing and implementing guidance on how relationships with external parties are managed to professionally accepted standards in order to deliver high levels of partner confidence, with sufficient tools, governance and oversight mechanisms.		collaboration; capturing the economic and social benefit from research through improvements to innovation, knowledge exchange and scale-up. HEIF priorities: Effective university collaboration with industry; collaborative research programmes at scale between universities and the private sector.	through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities	
Further develop and embed a key account management approach to partnerships, developing institution-wide capabilities, resources and processes for managing partnerships with a wide range of external organisations, from local and national government and large corporates, through to SMEs, community organisations and charities. Develop a 'business gateway' for the SME outreach and partnerships service. Further develop strategic institutional outreach with local industry and public organisations, in the form of campaigns, and a coordinated approach to engagement with local SMEs.	2.8 Partnership Management staff £50k campaigns and outreach budget	R&D Roadmap: Engaging with businesses to understand emerging priorities and needs, and areas of potential coordination and collaboration; capturing the economic and social benefit from research through improvements to innovation, knowledge exchange and scale-up. HEIF priorities: Effective university collaboration with industry; collaborative research programmes at scale between universities and the private sector. Levelling up R&D across the UK: Place Strategy; fostering	Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities Aim 3: To capture, evaluate and promote successful knowledge exchange and impact	Ongoing

Deliver an annual partners' event to celebrate KE and showcase best in class ways of working.		co-creation & collaboration; SME outreach.		
Programme to grow economic and societal impact; building on engagement and collaboration with external partners and working closely with academic colleagues to share best practice in developing and facilitating research impact. Further building on our successful model of translational research hubs, drawing together professional and academic expertise at critical interface points. Providing a new service for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), as a vehicle for KE through innovation and skills development, as well as recruitment tool for graduates – includes a new role to focus on KTPs, with the ambition to grow and to develop a financially sustainable model for our portfolio of partnerships.	7.9 Impact Development staff	R&D Roadmap: Fostering greater collaboration and networks between funders, researchers, practitioners and civic leaders to embed a system that delivers stronger local economic benefit and improved quality of life outcomes from R&D ('place', 'levelling up'). Strengthening the interactions between discovery research, applied research, innovation, commercialisation and deployment, accelerating the journey between concept and commercial application.	Aim 1: To enhance and improve our knowledge exchange culture Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities Aim 3: To capture, evaluate and promote successful knowledge exchange and impact	2021 - onward
Implement a range of initiatives to combine disciplines and capabilities, harness expertise, and bring researchers and external partners together at the early stages of problem definition and research design.	£200k of funds is passed to our academic community, through our University Research Institutes, for partnership development	R&D Roadmap: Fostering greater collaboration and networks between funders, researchers, practitioners, and civic leaders; 'Place' and	Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities	Ongoing

		'Levelling up'; talent and skills development.		
Delivering a range of initiatives ensuring that all employers (local business, start-ups, national and international companies) can access students, graduates, and skills, including through placements, internships, CPD and related services. Further capitalise on opportunities presented by placements and internships as a foundation for future collaboration, through co-produced research with external partners.	Placements and internships – size, scale and numbers to be determined.	HEIF priorities: Skills and human capital development - considering the role of students in delivering knowledge exchange; enhanced employability prospects.	Aim 2: To enable knowledge exchange through collaborating more closely with business, government, civic organisations, and universities Aim 3: To capture, evaluate and promote successful knowledge exchange and impact	2021 - onward
Review of the university's approach to student-led KE and employer-led education delivery, to identify optimal and more coordinated mechanisms that maximise KE outcomes.	External consultancy Data and information	HEIF priorities: Skills and human capital development - considering the role of students in delivering knowledge exchange; enhanced employability prospects. Levelling up R&D across the UK: Place Strategy; SME outreach; talent and skills development.	Aim 3: To capture, evaluate and promote successful knowledge exchange and impact	2021-2022

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)

Governance and oversight

Overall responsibility for knowledge exchange (KE) rests with the Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise and is overseen by the University Research Committee, a Committee of Senate. The Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise leads the development and delivery of our institutional strategy for Research, Innovation and Partnerships, with progress monitored on a quarterly and annual basis against targets and sector benchmarks. Oversight of and accountability for our HEIF funding rests with the Executive Director Research & Enterprise and is allocated through our Research and Enterprise Division (RED).

Within RED, the Executive Director Research & Enterprise is responsible and accountable for monitoring the success of our activities against the strategic objectives. The Division is divided into critical business functions that lead the delivery of HEIF-funded programmes, projects and activities.

Directors of each function are members of a divisional Executive Board, which is the principal management and executive decision-making group of RED. The Executive Board also includes representatives for EDI and wellbeing, and operational functions such as finance and HR. Its responsibilities include the development and implementation of strategy, key policies and procedures, risks and budgets; and the monitoring of strategic financial performance, and the prioritisation and allocation of resources. Within this context, its terms of reference include the following core duties:

- To develop, deliver and oversee the implementation of the RED Strategy, the coordination of strategic planning and resourcing…and the monitoring of key performance metrics (including in relation to EDI and wellbeing).
- To monitor, review, and approve progress towards RED plans and budgets, ensuring performance is consistent with the University's Planning Framework, and its strategic priorities and targets.
- To review the strategic environment in which RED and the University operates, including the rapid and effective dissemination of key policy, funding and performance information, and engage the University and RED communities regarding key strategic choices in order to facilitate better, evidence-based decision-making.
- To provide oversight and monitoring to ensure Value for Money across RED.
- To monitor operating and financial performance against targets. This includes the monitoring of income, expenditure, and key Strategic Delivery Projects.

The following are monitored by the RED Executive Board on a regular basis and (where appropriate) with detailed annual reports:

- Divisional budgets and financial performance (including a focus on HEIF)
- Divisional risks and issues log and report
- Divisional strategic plan and key performance indicators

In conducting these duties, the RED Executive Board is supported by a Senior Management Group (comprising Heads of divisional teams) and a cross-cutting team which focuses on KE and impact, with other cross-cutting teams aligned to our six faculties. For large initiatives, e.g. large scale value propositions or complex institutional research and innovation bids, RED forms agile teams. Teams are also created to lead on the review of major initiatives and projects/programmes, post completion, to identify lessons learned and develop recommendations for future change and improvement.

Strategic research and innovation related initiatives of scale use the same approach, with governance boards and committees providing review, oversight and strategic direction. Our institutional partnerships also put in place external stakeholder groups overseeing outcomes and impact.

We have recently developed structured governance mechanisms to manage key partnerships at the University via a cross-institution 'partnership operations group' that assesses partnerships in which we are investing significant time, examining whether they are delivering maximum mutual benefit, and considers possible new key partnerships (based on potential mutual value). The group in turn reports through RED to the University Research Committee.

Our enterprise (business support) activities are delivered via a subsidiary business called Science Research Foundation Ltd (SRF), which operates our world-leading business incubation space, Engine Shed. Our relationship with Fund Managers Parkwalk is via another subsidiary, Bristol Innovations Ltd, which has raised £1m investment funds each year since 2017/18. Directors of these subsidiary companies include the Executive

Director Research & Enterprise and the Chief Finance Services Officer. The subsidiary companies hold Board meetings to evaluate budgets and plans, as well as meeting statuary obligations.

In all cases our KE activity is conducted in accordance with our [University Ethics of Research Policy](#) and [Governance and Integrity Policy](#).

Information and evaluation

One of the three main aims of our HEIF plan is to *capture, evaluate and celebrate successful knowledge exchange and impact*. We are committed to developing mechanisms for continuous improvement and for evaluating performance, success and sustainability.

We recently contracted an external consultancy to conduct an independent review of our KE culture and activities. Our HEIF plan incorporates many of the findings and recommendations arising from this exercise. These include driving further research collaboration and partnership, realising impact from research and innovation, and continued support for regional engagement and leadership. We will conduct a similar review towards the end of the HEIF period, in 2024-25, as a summative evaluation of the success of our HEIF plan, to identify lessons learned and to inform future strategic planning.

As a learning organisation, we will develop further formative evaluations, including ways through which external organisations as well as our academics can feed back and improve our services and activities. We will establish processes for sharing best practice and learning and will embed formal approaches to collecting feedback to drive improvements in KE. This will serve to embed best practice across the University as well as to further develop collaborations with our external partners.

We will continue to work closely with relevant networks, such as the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN), and professional associations including PraxisAuril and ARMA, providing leadership and sector-specific best practice. The Executive Director Research & Enterprise is a member of the current ARMA Board and several colleagues across the division are involved in PraxisAuril and ARMA Committees and Working Groups, underpinning our commitment to sharing knowledge and best practice, and to personal and professional development across the sector.

We will also implement a suite of KE performance indicators that can be embedded within faculties and RED, and which will be reported to our University Research Committee and University Executive Board, to ensure senior management has oversight of KE activities and performance. This will both drive and be driven by each Faculty's annual Integrated Planning Process, as well as through iterative planning and evaluation led by University Research Committee and RED's Directorate. We will draw on detailed analysis of annual sector HEBCIS data and KEF outcomes, benchmarking University of

Bristol against sector comparators, as well as exploring more qualitative indicators of KE and impact.

Bristol's performance in the first KEF exercise was in the top 10% of all institutions for working with the public and third sector and for public and community engagement, the top 20% for research partnerships and for IP and commercialisation, and the top 30% for working with business. Our performance was also at or above the cluster average for four out of the seven perspectives. This was an excellent outcome for the University, which illustrates our strength in collaborative research, through engaging with a range of external partners and leveraging diverse income streams, in addition to commercialisation, and gives us a great platform to build on as we launch our new civic university strategy in 2021. We will undergo further detailed analysis of these results, and those of the forthcoming KEF2, with a view to prioritising the delivery of our HEIF strategic plan and focussing our efforts and investment in realising our strategic aims.

This outcomes-based approach to evaluating the delivery of our institutional KE strategy will ensure that we are able to effectively monitor progress against objectives and measure success, and ultimately to use this information to manage the allocation of our HEIF funding against institutional and strategic priorities. This approach is underpinned by our divisional and institutional values, which are embedded throughout our governance and decision-making processes. Essential to this is openness and transparency; equality, diversity and inclusivity; and sustainability – both in terms of our activities and in terms of our wider strategy and ambition. We also have an institutional [Statement on Responsible Research Assessment](#), which extends beyond research to both impact and KE evaluation as part of the wider landscape.