

RE-P-2020-03-Annex B

University of Exeter

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 University of Exeter Business Engagement Strategy covers the period 2017-22.

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/>

This Strategy has delivered rapid KE growth, doubling the number and value of KE projects in just four years from c1000 projects worth £36.6M in 2016-17 to over 2000 projects worth £72.5M in 2019-20. Most of its other strategic objectives have also been met including the active engagement of over 430 academic staff from all our Colleges. We are now developing a new KE strategy which will form a key part of our strategies for Research and Innovation, Education and the Region and will be shaped by the new University Corporate Strategy to 2030.

This new KE strategy aims to drive '*sustainable, secure, creative, healthy futures*' by building effective, dynamic partnerships for innovation and impact leading to social and economic benefit. It will create an inspirational innovation community across all our Colleges, collaborating naturally with partners including industry, social enterprise, small business and government at global, national and regional scale. It aims to create a further increase in the quality and value of

impactful collaborations. This will be achieved through three strategic objectives and three underpinning priorities:

Building transformational partnerships in key sectors

- We will develop sector-focused, interdisciplinary KE projects with key partners to address global challenges; provide solutions to regional and national priorities; and undertake high-risk projects (i.e. “Exeter ARIAs”). Initial priorities include a major focus on coalescing our major climate, environment and sustainability research into a clear brand and offer to external organisations, helping them transition to net zero.
- Priority sectors include energy and clean growth (linked to the Green Industrial revolution priorities); land use and food systems; water and waste; life sciences; advanced manufacturing; mining; defence, security and justice; aerospace and space; and digital and creative industries. This is underpinned by world-leading expertise in Net Zero and the circular economy; environmental intelligence; data and AI; and digital transformation.
- We will build new strategic corporate partnerships and strengthen our existing partnerships offering on-campus shared facilities such as our existing partnerships with Shell, Victrex, Astra Zeneca, South West Water and regional NHS Trusts; enhanced account management; and facilitated cross-University collaboration and access to opportunities and networks.

Leading regional innovation

- We will support regional levelling-up policies by continuing place-based investments in the SW Peninsula and supporting networks of high-growth businesses.
- We aim to be at the heart of a thriving innovation ecosystem building on our innovation assets: SETsquared Exeter – part of the World’s no 1 University business incubator; our strategic partnership with Exeter Science Park; and future development of an Exeter Innovation District.
- We will co-create Civic University Agreements and strategic collaborations with important regional organisations including Local authorities, NHS Trusts, FE Colleges, LEPs etc to strengthen the region’s R&D and higher-level skills capacity working closely with GW4 and SETsquared and other Peninsula University partners.
- We will support a new Regional Skills Plan, investing in strategic skills alongside our existing escalator for digital skills, (data science and analytics) encouraging employability and talent retention in the region.
- We will grow our support for academic and student entrepreneurs from UG to PhD to Professor, focusing particularly on underrepresented groups, and student knowledge exchange and community engagement which will contribute to building a vibrant regional innovation economy.

Strengthened Commercial Focus

We will strengthen our areas of *weaker* performance in the KEF - these include:

- Supporting businesses to start, scale up and gain investment; spin-out and licensing activity; growing proof-of-concept and early stage venturing funds including a new early stage investment fund with SETsquared;
- Developing a lifelong learning ecosystem for People and Skills by creating a new approach to commercial CPD, building on our successful Degree Apprenticeship programme with a new scheme to recognise micro-credentials.

We also aim to deliver the following three underpinning priorities:

Sustainable Culture change: In line with the R&D Roadmap aim to make the UK the best place in the world to be a researcher, inventor or innovator we will develop a cross-University KE expert community acting as champions, mentors and supporters for those who wish to undertake KE (especially from underrepresented communities). This includes an Innovation Fellows and Research Studentships scheme to provide capacity for rapid response; and an 'ideas Hub' training programme for innovators. We will expand our Open Innovation Platform providing flexible, rapid funding to buy out academic time; to bring in external associates; and to support higher-risk projects or University-wide initiatives.

USP - Clearer Differentiation of the Exeter Offer: In all our Colleges we will promote centres/ groups aiming for excellence in knowledge exchange linked to key sectors/initiatives including developing Exeter's highly regarded policy engagement activity (Policy@Exeter). We will develop a new University to Business (U2B) brand, engagement strategy and marketing to increase business awareness and engagement and develop further public engagement activity to drive societal impact.

Strengthened KE Processes and Governance: We will promote and develop further the existing reward and recognition programme for KE activity including introducing an annual KE/ Impact event to showcase Knowledge Exchange in all our Colleges. We will strengthen our governance model to include a new KE Strategy Board to: monitor progress and evaluate success; to ensure that processes are continually improved over time; and that we respond effectively to the KEF and KE Concordat, working transparently and ethically.

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>Building Exceptional partnerships in key sectors</p>				
<p>Build on our flagship interdisciplinary research institutes, Exeter Research Networks and key research centres, we will develop sector-focused interdisciplinary projects of applied R&D and Innovation expertise, address global challenges; provide innovative solutions to regional and national priorities; and undertake high-risk projects (i.e. “Exeter ARIAs”).</p> <p>Key sectors link to Green Industrial revolution, R&D Road Map and Build Back Better – our plan for growth.</p>	<p>Team of sector specialists with experience of key sectors plus annual operating budget of £50k</p> <p>c20 FTE</p>	<p>Supports Build Back Better in recognising the benefits of collaboration between industry, science and government and the impact that such partnerships can deliver for the economy, society and addressing global challenges</p> <p>Supports R&D Roadmap ‘Being at the forefront of Global collaboration, by forming strategic partnerships with international organisations to grow opportunities and open up new markets</p>	<p>Pillar 1 of Business Engagement Strategy</p> <p>https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/</p> <p>KEF Institutional Context Narrative</p>	<p>2021-22 onwards</p>
<p>Strengthen Corporate Strategic partnerships</p>	<p>1 Head of Corporate Partnerships and up to 5 staff with partial corporate partner responsibilities. Extend</p>	<p>Supports R&D Roadmap and Industrial strategy in the emphasis placed on both maintaining and developing new partnerships as key to bringing</p>	<p>Pillar 1 of Business Engagement Strategy</p> <p>https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/</p> <p>KEF Institutional Context Narrative</p>	<p>2021-22 onwards</p>

	contracts for 2 FTE corporate partner support roles 100% HEIF funded	research and industry together to create a stronger economy		
Leading regional innovation				
Build on regional strengths with place-based investments on a small number of internationally-recognised knowledge assets in the SW Peninsula; support networks of high-growth businesses	Team of regional specialists 7 FTE plus annual operational budget of c50k leverages a team of over 40 and attracts significant regional support activity using regional funding. 15% HEIF funded	Supports 'R&D Roadmap and Build Back Better– 'Levelling Up across the UK' in fostering greater co-creation and collaboration building on regional capacity;	Pillar 3 of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/ KEF Local Growth and Regeneration Narrative Regional Engagement Strategy	2021-2022 onwards
Supporting and driving a thriving innovation ecosystem linked to SETsquared and Exeter Science Park and future Innovation Districts/ Zones	SETsquared Team based at Exeter Science Park (leveraged by HEIF funding but mostly funded from commercial income.) Membership of SETsquared and support for Investment Fund infrastructure.	Supports R&D Roadmap and Build Back Better – 'Levelling Up across the UK' in supporting impact-focussed activities such as SME outreach, business incubation and 'supporting new opportunities to strengthen the innovation ecosystem'	Pillar 3 of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/ KEF Local Growth and Regeneration Narrative	2021-2022 onwards

	40% HEIF funded			
Build productive partnerships with place-based organisations	Supported by the Regional and Sector specialists teams (see above).	Supports R&D Roadmap and Build Back Better– ‘Levelling Up across the UK’ in enabling businesses to thrive and fulfil their potential and have a bigger impact on the recovery and long-term economic growth in the SW region	Pillar 3 of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/ KEF Local Growth and Regeneration Narrative	2021-2022 onwards
Grow KE talent pipeline and support academic/student entrepreneurs to build a vibrant innovation economy Establish an Innovation Ideas Hub to provide training and support for academic, research students and PS teams	Team supporting student entrepreneurship 4-6FTE 2 FTE supporting ‘Ideas Hub’ to provide training for academic entrepreneurs and those interested in KE. 50% HEIF funded	Supports OfS objectives in supporting students to achieve the ‘knowledge and skills that will contribute to their national and local economies and communities, and drive productivity’ Supports Build Back Better-supporting entrepreneurial activity and investing in turning ideas into commercial products and services Supports R&D Roadmap ‘Driving up innovation and productivity’ in creating the right support and infrastructure for entrepreneurs	Pillar 2 of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/ KEF Local Growth and Regeneration Narrative	2021-2022 onwards

		and start-ups to develop and go on to scale-up		
Support the region's labour market investing in strategic skills to support growth and opportunity – enhance employability and talent retentions	Team of Regional specialists (see above)	Supports Build Back Better in supporting high quality education and skills training to sustain productivity growth and competitiveness Supports R&D Roadmap in inspiring and enabling talented people & teams largely focused in R&D and how this will support growth for country.	Pillar 2 of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/ KEF Local Growth and Regeneration Narrative	2021-2022 onwards
Strengthened Commercial Focus				
Support businesses to start, scale up and to increase spin-out and licensing activity including growing new venturing funds and supporting SETsquared to launch new investment fund	Grow team of innovation experts from 3-5 FTE 100% HEIF funded	Supports Build Back Better in creating a climate to enable UK's science and innovation strengths to thrive – reducing barriers & incentivising the development of creative ideas and technologies Supports R&D Roadmap 'Driving up innovation and productivity' in creating systems that unlocks innovation and enables growth in the economy	Mechanisms of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/	2021-22 onwards

<p>Developing a common framework for collaborative partnerships that is simple and rapid to use and is understood by all teams including finance, legal and HR. This framework could also be used to help build consortia around key initiatives.</p>	<p>Contracts and management team x 5 FTE</p> <p>Linked to Research and legal teams with HEIF allocation.</p> <p>100% HEIF funded</p>	<p>Supports R&D Roadmap 'Driving up innovation and productivity' through systems and processes that enable the unlocking of barriers and the creating of streamlined, transparent and easily understood approaches to enable KE activity to be undertaken</p>	<p>Mechanisms of Business Engagement Strategy</p> <p>https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/</p>	<p>2021-22 onwards</p>
<p>Establish a series of funding schemes to support KE activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand our Open Innovation Platform (OIP) to provide flexible funding to support major business-focussed projects • Proof of Concept Fund • Market Validation Fund 	<p>Translational Funding and KTP Team x 6 FTE</p> <p>HEIF funding for OIF and special initiatives c£4-600k pa</p>	<p>Supports R&D Roadmap 'Raising our research ambitions' in creating innovative funding mechanisms and schemes to support investment in new ideas and research to deliver change , provide companies with competitive advantage and boost the economy</p>	<p>Mechanisms of Business Engagement Strategy</p> <p>https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/</p>	<p>2021-22 onwards</p>
<p>Develop a lifelong learning ecosystem for People and Skills building on Degree Apprenticeships and CPD sector engagement including a new scheme to recognise micro-credentials</p>	<p>Grow CPD support team from 2 FTE to 3-4 initially and then funded via the University.</p> <p>100% HEIF funded initially</p>	<p>Supports OfS & Build Back Better objectives in encouraging lifelong learning and in equipping students ie 'Qualifications hold their value over time, and students are able to use them long after leaving higher education'.</p>	<p>Pillar 2 of Business Engagement Strategy</p> <p>https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/</p> <p>KEF Local Growth and Regeneration Narrative</p>	<p>2021-22 only</p>

		Supports Build Back Better in building on the apprenticeships revolution and equipping individuals with the skills needs of employers		
Culture Change				
<p>Establish an expert community of academics and professional services staff to include:</p> <p>1) Accountable lead for KE activity in each College/discipline</p> <p>2) Fellows and Research Studentship scheme to bridge gap between academic and industry with capacity for rapid response to opportunities or requests from partners for intensive or short-term projects</p>	<p>Appointment of a KE lead academic to each College/discipline.</p> <p>Establish scheme using some HEIF buyout</p> <p>Use HEIF to leverage other funds for research studentships and industrial fellows</p> <p>20% HEIF funded</p>	Supports Build Back Better in creating a 'research ecosystem that simulates innovation through the exchange of ideas, knowledge and talent' Supports R&D Road map 'Raising our research ambitions' – time to deliver 'moonshot' ambitions and create environment that these can happen in and 'Inspiring and enabling talented people and teams' in providing training for researchers and innovators and retraining over the course of their careers	To form part of the new KE Strategy that is currently being developed	2022-23 onwards
Introduce a regular showcase of University Knowledge Exchange and the people who lead this work – with	Regular showcasing of KE activity – in line with other showcased activity such as the IAAs.	Supports R&D Roadmap 'Inspiring and enabling talented people and teams' to nurture and support talent from all	To form part of the new KE Strategy that is currently being developed	2022-23 onwards

a Vice-Chancellor's KE Award scheme	Introduction of a VC KE Award scheme using HEIF, supported by corporate partners. 30% HEIF funded	backgrounds/ experiences, enable people to pursue diverse and flexible careers in R&D, attract high quality students, researchers and entrepreneurs because this type of work will be recognised in the institution along with teaching and research		
Supporting Infrastructure				
Funding for office support including events/marketing	To support costs relating to delivery of events, marketing, systems, subscriptions etc 100% HEIF funded	Supports Build Back Better and R&D Roadmap in providing the underpinning structure and systems needed to support KE activity and to enable it to adapt to the new challenges being faced with the departure from the	Mechanisms of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/	2021-22 onwards
Support for other Professional Services Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Services • Legal • Marketing and Communications 	Contribution to support from other professional services relating to research collaboration projects, dedicated legal support relating to IP and commercialisation issues, KE marketing and communications 100% HEIF funded	EU, the after effects of Covid-19 on the economy and the global challenges such as climate change, an aging population and clean energy supplies.	Mechanisms of Business Engagement Strategy https://www.exeter.ac.uk/iib/about/strategy/	2021-22 onwards

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.

1. Knowledge Exchange Governance

University of Exeter KE activity is structured around the three pillars of our current Business Engagement Strategy 2017-22. These are:

- a) Collaborative R&D Services;
- b) Highly Skilled People;
- c) Regional Innovation.

The Business Engagement Strategy is overseen by the Assistant Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Innovation and Business. An Independent Council Member provides assurance to University Council that the Business Engagement Strategy is well managed and appropriate.

All Colleges have KE plans and targets linked to the Business Engagement Strategy which are set on an annual basis and monitored throughout the year. From 2022 onwards we propose that each College/ Unit has an accountable lead for KE who will promote and drive KE activity for the College/ Unit, encourage interdisciplinarity and act as part of a new KE Strategy Board which acts as the overarching University governance group for KE chaired by the Assistant DVC.

There is a Regional Strategy Group and its Terms of Reference have been revised and its remit expanded to cover all activities related to regional skills and education, arts and culture and community engagement. An Independent Council member attends meetings.

The Innovation, Impact and Business team (IIB) supports academic staff in the delivery of Business Engagement Strategy activity. The team was successfully reaccredited to the ISO 9001 standard in 2019-20, giving assurance that its work with business meets rigorous quality management standards.

The Business Engagement Strategy is due for renewal and a new KE strategy is currently being developed. This strategy will be shaped by the new University corporate strategy which is in development via a series of institution-wide 'Big Conversations' over the period April to June 2021.

The new KE Strategy Board will ensure that processes are continually improved over time and will Manage our response to the KEF and KE Concordat helping University leadership and governing Bodies to receive clear information and advice on KE opportunities and challenges.

2. *Managing HEIF Expenditure*

HEIF will continue to be managed through a separate budget centre to ensure transparency and a clear audit trail. The budget will be set by the senior IIB Leadership Team with consultation from Colleges and final sign off from the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG). Accountability for the HEIF budget rests with the Director of IIB. The HEIF budget will be managed as part of IIB's overall budget including any funding allocated to other parts of the University.

HEIF has been consistently managed by this Directorate which has in-depth knowledge of the fund and reporting requirements on all the key areas of KE funding within the institution, being responsible for reporting for the HE Business and Community Interaction Survey, the KEF and KE Concordat. HEIF funding is subject to the University's financial forecasting and budget planning processes and the Financial Regulations governing the University's finances.

Regular monthly updates will be provided to IIB Leadership Team on spend v budget and any variances reported and acted upon.

3. *Measuring Progress*

The University monitors a wide range of KPIs relating to its Business Engagement Strategy. For the HEIF Accountability Statement we have identified interim KPIs and outcomes to be measured against during the next HEIF period. Given the transition between strategies we may revise these KPIs once the new University Corporate Strategy is in place.

The HEIF Accountability statement will be monitored using the following 5 interim KPIs:

- **Knowledge Exchange with business** - measured by business research income , IUK, business consultancy contracts and IP income to the University
 - **Regional Regeneration** - measured by total value of regeneration and development awards attracted to the region with UoE as a partner
 - **Knowledge Exchange through education** - measured by CPD income / Learner days (from 2022-23 onwards)
 - **Entrepreneurship** - measured by no of new supported student/academic staff start-ups/ spin-outs and the cumulative value of the overall portfolio of all active firms
 - **Impact on partners** - measured by no of partners supported and overall value created (earnings, jobs, IUK income etc - derived from post project evaluations)
- i) Each KPI will have an agreed baseline against which we will compare our performance with national and regional measures from recognised sources. These will be linked to the metrics which we will be measured on via the KEF and, therefore, will be based on data that can be measured, audited and benchmarked against in a robust and consistent manner.
 - ii) We have a new research monitoring system and have recently invested in updating our CRM system, iEngage. These systems will help to manage our data and communications surrounding our KE activity and enable the information to be collated centrally.
 - iii) Each college has a Business Partner to help develop and support plans for external engagement and to ensure integration with wider plans. Any outputs, outcomes and economic and societal impacts will be reported through the College to the Business Partner who will monitor this information.
 - iv) Each specialist professional team will produce a regular monitoring report highlighting any successes, concerns or issues that require escalation. Each sector team will develop and monitor a sector plan highlighting trends and opportunities, identifying key academic leads.

4. Evaluation of Outcomes and Lessons Learned

- i) We will use experience gained from HEIF monitoring, good practice from current monitoring methods used to analyse the Open Innovation Platform and UKRI Impact Accelerator Accounts (IAAs) and established methods to monitor ERDF outcomes, and integrate these into the monitoring and evaluation of the new measures. Within the team we have specialists with experience of monitoring and evaluation of ERDF. This team will lead the evaluation of the outcomes and impacts of the strategy, drawing in external specialists as required.
- ii) We will establish a KE Performance Evaluation function, to work alongside the KE Strategy Board, to bring together the data, evaluations carried out, case studies, dissemination of evidence and impact. The KE PE function will also take account of KE Concordat self-assessment and will develop and monitor the action plan. This will enable the review of

performance from a wide range of KE staff, champions and supporters to be analysed and evaluated in one place.

- iii) The KE Strategy Board will develop lessons learned from the evaluated outcomes and analysis of performance information including the KE Concordat Action Plan. These will be assessed and organised to reflect the type and level of action required to include areas that need additional support and new measures to generate improvement and those that are displaying an effective approach and to embed them as best practice.
- iv) An annual review will be submitted to the governing body for approval. We will continue to carry out our annual survey to measure our partners' perceptions of our engagement with them. The outcomes will be reviewed and any actions acted upon.
- v) Good practice identified through our annual Vice-Chancellor's Awards event will be disseminated via our KE Expert Community and champions who will pass on new approaches and skills to their mentees and to their local communities.