2025-26 HEIF Annual Monitoring Statement (AMS) guidance

This guidance supports completion of the 2025-26 HEIF annual monitoring statement (AMS).

For queries, contact Sacha Ayres, Senior Policy Adviser, kepolicy@re.ukri.org

Overview

The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) supports a wide range of knowledge exchange (KE) activities between higher education providers and external partners, generating economic and societal benefits.

As a condition of funding, HEIF recipients were required to submit an accountability statement setting out how they intend to use HEIF funding and provide annual monitoring information on how funding has been used.

The AMS provides assurance that HEIF funding is being used effectively and delivers value for money. The information collected is used to:

- confirm that HEIF and associated supplements have been used for eligible activities
- monitor expenditure, underspends and associated funding risks
- understand how funding is allocated across different KE activities
- understand progress against institutional KE objectives
- inform policy development
- support long-term evaluation of HEIF impacts and return on investment

Accountability Basis for 2025-26

In 2021, providers submitted Accountability Statements covering the funding period ending 31 July 2025.

The 2025 HEIF Policies and Priorities publication confirmed that institutions could continue using their 2025-26 HEIF allocation to deliver activities aligned with those 2021 Accountability Statements. Institutions were also encouraged to begin aligning activity with the priorities set out in the 2025 HEIF Policies and Priorities and their emerging 2026-31 Accountability Statements.

As a result, for 2025-26 allocations institutions may report activity delivered against:

- their 2021 Accountability Statement
- their 2026-31 Accountability Statement
- or a combination of both

Institutions should report against the basis on which their 2025-26 HEIF allocation has been used.

Accessing the AMS

The AMS is distributed and submitted through the Research England data portal.

Heads of Institution and nominated KE contacts will be notified by email when documentation becomes available.

Documents provided

The data portal will provide the following AMS documents for each provider:

For completion

- AMS template (link to online form)
- Financial return (Excel file)

Supporting documents

- AMS guidance (link to published guidance)
- AMS submission offline replica (Word document)

Previous submissions

The '**HEIF Annual Monitoring Survey archive**' data release contains PDF copies of previous AMS submissions and related query correspondence.

Research England review process

The HEIF AMS submissions will be subject to review by Research England. Where additional information or clarification is required, Research England will contact the institution's nominated KE contact by email.

Queries are normally issued during early summer and resolved through correspondence between the institution and Research England.

Once either:

- no queries have been raised; or
- all queries have been satisfactorily resolved,

Research England will confirm approval of the submission by email to the Head of Institution and nominated KE contact.

Institutions can normally expect the AMS review process to conclude by July 2027.

HEIF 2025-26 AMS Structure

The AMS consists of three parts.

Part A: Narrative Questions

Part A collects information on how institutions have used their 2025-26 HEIF allocation and any related supplements to support their knowledge exchange objectives.

The information provided is also used as evidence of the impact and value delivered through HEIF.

Responses are submitted through the online form. An offline replica of the template is available from the RE data port and pre-prepared responses may be copied and pasted into the online system.

Narrative sections

- Contact details
- Bases for accountability for 2025-26
- 2025-26 HEIF allocation
- 2025-26 business and commercialisation supplement

Part B: Financial Return

Part B collects financial information on how HEIF funding has been allocated across expenditure and infrastructure categories.

This information:

- confirms that funding has been spent within the funding year
- supports analysis of how institutions use HEIF
- contributes to wider assessment of HEIF's impact and return on investment.

Completing the financial return

In order to complete the excel financial return institutions should:

- report actual expenditure incurred during 2025-26
- allocate expenditure to one of the three expenditure categories
- for each expenditure category, estimate the percentage attributable to each infrastructure category
- ensure that infrastructure category percentages total 100% within each expenditure category

More detailed guidance, including a worked example is provided in the Annex A.

Financial return sections

- Table B - Upload the completed Excel financial return showing how the 2025-26 HEIF allocation and business and commercialisation supplement were used.
- Current spend position - Report any risk of underspend for 2026-27 allocation to support sector-level risk monitoring.

Part C: Institutional Approval

Confirmation that the completed submission has been through relevant institutional approval processes.

Annex A – Completing the financial return

Table B requires institutions to report actual expenditure against three expenditure categories.

For each expenditure category, institutions must estimate the proportion of expenditure attributable to each of the seven infrastructure categories.

The infrastructure category percentages within each expenditure category must total 100%.

Expenditure categories

The three main expenditure categories to report actual expenditure in £000s are:

- **Investment in dedicated KE staff** - Costs of employing and supporting staff involved directly in KE (e.g. KE offices; enterprise offices).
- **Investment in academic staff** - Cost of KE training for academics and buying the time of academics for KE activity, as well as supporting salaries for leadership in KE.
- **Expenditure towards other costs** - Non staff costs related to all forms of KE projects including proof of concept, matched and seed funding and pump-priming or events.

Infrastructure categories

For each expenditure category, institutions should estimate the proportion of funding directed towards the following areas.

- Facilitating the research exploitation process (non-technology transfer)
- Commercialisation of research (technology transfer)
- Skills and human capital development
- Knowledge sharing and diffusion
- Supporting the community and public engagement
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Exploiting the physical assets of the HEI

Further definitions and examples are provided at Annex B:

Worked example to complete the finance return

The example below demonstrates how activity is translated into the financial return.

In this example:

- the institution receives a total HEIF allocation of £2 million
- £1 million is allocated to support Dedicated KE Staff
- the institution estimates how that expenditure is distributed across the seven infrastructure categories

The percentages within the Dedicated KE Staff category total 100%.

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Table 1 – Worked example activity mapping

Dedicated KE staff

Infrastructure category	Example activity	Cost	% of HEIF
Facilitating the research and exploitation process (non TT)	Research Contract office	£280k	28%
Commercialisation (tech transfer)	Tech transfer office	£340k	34%
Skills and human capital development	CPD business engagement team	£150k	15%
Knowledge sharing and diffusion	Regional alumni network development	£50k	5%
Supporting the community / public engagement	Festival of ideas programme team	£100k	10%
Enterprise and entrepreneurship	Staff and student entrepreneurial mentoring scheme	£30k	3%
Exploiting the HEI's physical assets	Specialist laboratory business development support	£50k	5%
	Total	£1,000k	100%

Annex B – Finance reporting categories

Provided below are examples of activities that may be found within each infrastructure category, these are not exhaustive lists.

Infrastructure categories

Facilitating the research exploitation process (non-technology transfer)

E.g. Business development including facilitating collaborative research, contract research, developing capabilities and supporting academics to exploit research exploitation opportunities and providing client, legal support and IP advice; Consultancy services including consultancy delivery, managing academic consultancy activities and supporting case making; External relations including identification and engagement with strategic partners, external research fundraising, network management and events and student placements; Press communications and marketing including both online and offline marketing and communications; Dialogue with policy-makers; Supporting access points for external organisations.

Commercialisation of research (technology transfer)

E.g. Support for intelligence and analysis including due diligence and market analysis; Support for knowledge ownership including patenting, IP, legal, licensing, start up and marketing advice; Investment funding including seed funding start-ups and spin-offs, supporting translational funding applications, management of investment networks and collaborative investment funds; Pro-active business development including identifying and engaging with key partners.

Skills and human capital development

E.g. Supporting development and delivery of CPD/short courses for career development, bespoke training, business skills and entrepreneurship etc.; Lifelong learning including for academics and students, professional and personal education and employability; Work placements and project experience for apprenticeships, internships or work experience and support for work-based placements and student consultancy projects; Curriculum development with external partners.

Knowledge sharing and diffusion

E.g. Facilitating engagement between academics and external organisations through meetings, conferences with external partners, networking events, award ceremonies and academic/business staff exchanges; Formation and management of alumni networks including mentoring/coaching services on employability, entrepreneurship and research commercialisation or management of investor/business angel networks and associated competitions; Support of engagement with KE professional network activity such as staff placements and exchanges.

Supporting the community and public engagement

E.g. Supporting public engagement in research (PER) including pilot initiatives to public engagement; Developing community and social capital including hosting participative community projects, programmes and events, working with at-risk social groups; Supporting student and staff volunteering such as voluntary services, community projects, study or work abroad programmes and young person mentoring; Supporting knowledge diffusion including public lectures, exhibitions or museum education (noting overlap with specific knowledge sharing and diffusion category); Supporting social cohesion such as hosting information hubs or working with local charities.

Enterprise and entrepreneurship

E.g. Enterprise and entrepreneurship training for academics and students, including support for staff engagement in enterprise, enterprise-related careers advice to students, social enterprise and entrepreneurs in residence.

Exploiting the physical assets of the HEI

E.g. Support for science parks including managing specialist facilities, providing value-added services for established firms and marketing and media activity; Providing start-up or entrepreneurship support including leasing flexible spaces, providing value-added services for start-ups, virtual incubation services and accelerator schemes; Supporting business enabling facilities including managing specialist equipment and specialist spaces with associated support services to support other KE activity.