

HEIF accountability statement

Narrative return template for HEIF funding period 2024-25

Return date: 31 January 2025

Birkbeck, University of London

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HEIF contact information

The contact provided here is responsible for ensuring that the head of institution has approved this HEIF Accountability Statement submission to Research England¹

Institution name:	Birkbeck, University of London
Contact name:	Andy Colley
Position:	Deputy Director, Innovation
Email:	a.colley@bbk.ac.uk
Phone:	
Additional email addresses to be CC'd into correspondence (optional):	KEF@bbk.ac.uk vc@bbk.ac.uk Sarah.lee@bbk.ac.uk
Has this KE strategy been approved for submission to Research England by the head of institution?	Yes (delete as appropriate)

¹ We would normally expect this to be the nominated KE contact held by Research England, for confirmation of who is currently held as the nominated KE contact email KEPolicy@re.ukri.org

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.

At Birkbeck, University of London, we have long championed knowledge for societal benefit. Since 1823, we have provided flexible, research-led education for working Londoners. As a research-intensive institution, we ensure our findings translate into meaningful societal, economic, and cultural impacts. Recently, we have revitalised our knowledge exchange (KE) efforts. Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) will play a crucial role in achieving and furthering these goals. Our commitment remains strong: making knowledge accessible and impactful for the wider community.

1. Reinforcing Governance and Infrastructure

In our 22-23 monitoring statement for non-recurrent KE funding, we identified that a key priority was to re-establish effective governance and support for KE. Since that time, we have established the Innovation and Commercialisation Board (ICB), which serves as the central body responsible for guiding and overseeing KE activities. This committee reports directly to the University Executive Board, ensuring that KE is embedded at the highest levels of our institution's decision-making processes. By developing clear policies, streamlining processes, and clarifying responsibilities within Schools, Faculties and the Innovation & Research Support Offices, we have created, and will continue to foster, a

supportive infrastructure that nurtures and promotes knowledge exchange. This infrastructure is further supported by a team of dedicated Impact and Knowledge Exchange Managers who are based in the Research Office but work in each Faculty to provide specialist advice to researchers, helping them identify potential societal and commercial applications of their work, and providing the crucial bridge back to the central teams. We have also recruited a Deputy Vice Chancellor for Innovation, Knowledge Exchange and Research, to drive growth in this area.

2. Research-Led Knowledge Exchange

Our approach to KE is deeply intertwined with its research strengths. We prioritise research-led KE activities that align with pressing regional, national, and global challenges in line with five identified interdisciplinary themes:

- Enterprise, Finance, Leadership
- Nature, Environment, Sustainability
- Digital, Data, Artificial Intelligence
- Health, Mind, Wellbeing
- Heritage, Histories, Cultures and Social Justice

To achieve this, we support researchers in integrating impact considerations into their projects. This involves fostering partnerships with policymakers, industry leaders, cultural institutions, and community organisations. Researchers receive guidance on building sustainable relationships and translating their findings into practical solutions that benefit society.

3. Empowering Students, the Community and Industry

We recognise that our students, the community and industry are central to our KE mission. By enhancing enterprise initiatives, we aim to equip all learners with the skills and confidence to develop innovative ideas and solve real-world problems. [Programmes that support student entrepreneurship, workplace learning, and career development play a crucial role in this effort.](#)

Our 200 years of civic engagement is another cornerstone of our KE strategy. We work closely with local communities, particularly in deprived areas such as Camden, to address social challenges and support economic renewal.

Through offering flexible, digital, and workplace-oriented learning programmes, we offer opportunities for lifelong learning, ensuring that knowledge remains accessible and beneficial to all. We have established [a new website area tailored towards engagement with industry.](#)

Strategic Use of HEIF Funding

To achieve these ambitious goals, the 2024/25 HEIF funding will be strategically deployed to expand our KE activities. Building on the work made possible with our 22-23 non-recurrent KE funding, our primary objective is to restore and grow beyond its KE activity levels to those seen in the early 2010s, when we were a leader in KE income generation. This effort focuses on several key priorities:

1. **Formalising Governance:** Using our newly established ICB to guide and monitor KE activities and ensure alignment with institutional priorities.
2. **Civic and Regional Engagement:** Develop our Civic collaborations with local partners to formalise our role in supporting regional development and social impact.
3. **Innovative Learning and Skills Initiatives:** Invest in digital and employer-oriented learning programmes, including CPD and short courses, to meet workforce development needs and support professional growth.
4. **Strengthening Partnerships:** Cultivate meaningful, long-term partnerships with industry, government, and community organisations, moving beyond transactional relationships to collaborative, impactful engagements.
5. **Evaluating Impact:** Implement robust mechanisms to measure the success of KE activities, ensuring continuous improvement and accountability.

Promoting Transparency and Building Capacity

Transparency and ethical practices are central to our approach to knowledge exchange. We are developing and will publish clear policies on [intellectual property](#), CPD, and student enterprise, making it easier for stakeholders to engage with our expertise. Furthermore, by offering training and development opportunities for academic and professional staff, we will build the capacity needed to sustain and grow KE activities. Recognising and rewarding KE efforts is also essential. We will ensure that contributions to knowledge exchange are valued in academic promotions and workload allocations, fostering a culture where KE continues to be recognised as an integral part of academic life.

Question 2 – Use of HEIF

How do you intend to use your 2024-25 HEIF allocation?

In this accountability statement return we would like to know about your plans for HEIF for the remainder of the funding period 2024-25. Please include indication of the planned timescale of the activity.

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. 2024-25 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 2024-25 HEIF allocation.	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
Development and delivery of a suite of short courses, CPD & Executive Education.	1x business development post – 25% HEIF funded 2x operational support posts – 100% HEIF funded	Industrial Strategy: Supports the “ People ” foundation by enhancing skills, employability, and workforce development. COVID-19 Recovery: Provides flexible learning options for reskilling and upskilling workers affected by the pandemic. Place and Civic Contribution: Engages with local communities to deliver education that meets regional needs, aligning with the levelling up agenda . HEIF Focus: Demonstrates value for money through practical and outcome-driven learning programs.	Empowering students, the community and industry	2024-25 onwards
Development of research and intellectual property exploitation capabilities	1x business development post – 25% HEIF funded	R&D Roadmap: Advances the Government's commitment to translating research into societal and economic benefits.	Reinforcing governance and infrastructure Empowering students,	2024-25 onwards

	<p>1x contracts management post – 25% HEIF funded</p> <p>Intellectual property researching fund – 50% HEIF</p> <p>'Business & Commercialisation Supplement funded'</p>	<p>Industrial Strategy: Strengthens the “Ideas” foundation by ensuring innovative research leads to new technologies and solutions.</p> <p>HEIF and KEF: Supports robust KE practices, ensuring accountability in the commercialization of research.</p> <p>Dynamism in Funding: Encourages dynamic performance through the effective exploitation of research outputs.</p>	academics, the community and industry	
Support for commercialisation of research (tech transfer) capabilities	<p>1x business development post – 25% HEIF funded</p> <p>1x contracts management post – 25% HEIF funded</p> <p>Tech transfer researching fund – 50% HEIF</p> <p>'Business & Commercialisation Supplement funded'</p>	<p>R&D Roadmap: Enhances knowledge exchange by bridging research and industry needs.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy: Contributes to “Ideas” and “People” by fostering innovation and creating opportunities for businesses and researchers.</p> <p>HEIF and KEF: Ensures universities deliver measurable outcomes in research commercialization and innovation.</p>	<p>Reinforcing governance and infrastructure</p> <p>Empowering students, academics, the community and industry</p>	2024-25 onwards

		Value for Money: Aligns with the Government's goal of ensuring funding supports practical, economically beneficial outcomes.		
<p>Growth of Open Library of the Humanities and retention of key staff</p> <p>Enhancing the OLH's Platform for Industry Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building new features to support (e.g. interactive tools, data visualisations & API) integrations with industry systems making it easier for industry partners (e.g. publishers, museums, media companies) to access, repurpose, and interact with academic content. This will facilitate real-time collaboration, content reuse, and innovation in content delivery. 	1x software development post - 100% HEIF funded	<p>R&D Roadmap: Promotes open access to research, aligning with the vision of broad knowledge dissemination.</p> <p>Industrial Strategy (People and Place): Supports scholarship and education in the humanities, contributing to cultural and societal development.</p> <p>COVID-19 Recovery: Sustains academic communities and retains essential staff, ensuring continuity in education and research.</p> <p>HEIF and KE Concordat: Aligns with principles of transparency, collaboration, and value for money in research output sharing.</p>	<p>Reinforcing governance and infrastructure</p> <p>Research led knowledge exchange</p>	Ongoing
Growth of knowledge exchange engagement activity between academics and external organisations.	1x business development post – 25% HEIF funded	R&D Roadmap: Encourages collaboration and partnerships between academia and industry or civic bodies.	Research led knowledge exchange	2024-25 onwards

	1x business development post – 8.33% HEIF funded	<p>Industrial Strategy (Ideas and Place): Supports innovation through engagement with external organizations and contributes to regional development.</p> <p>COVID-19 Recovery: Facilitates collaborative solutions to societal challenges post-pandemic.</p> <p>HEIF Accountability: Demonstrates effective use of funding through documented engagement outcomes and societal impacts.</p>		
<p>Mentoring pathways programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling Entrepreneurship-Focused Mentor Matching. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will match students with mentors who are entrepreneurs, start-up founders, or innovation leaders in relevant industries so students gain sector-specific insights into entrepreneurial mindsets, funding strategies, and business growth. Mentors receive feedback on emerging trends from academic study, fostering mutual learning. Industry Innovation Challenges via live briefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentors will present real-world business challenges their company or start-up is facing, which students explore and 	2x development posts – 75% HEIF funded	<p>Industrial Strategy (People): Enhances employability by equipping students with skills, guidance, and career development support.</p> <p>R&D Roadmap: Engages students in knowledge exchange activities, fostering future innovators and skilled professionals.</p> <p>COVID-19 Recovery: Supports students in navigating career challenges during and after the pandemic.</p> <p>HEIF and KEF: Recognises the role of students in KE,</p>	Empowering students, the community and industry	2024-25 onwards

provide ideas or mini-projects on during the mentoring period. Businesses receive fresh ideas and analysis, while students apply academic learning to real life entrepreneurial problems—creating tangible impact and fostering co-creation.		ensuring funding supports their development and contributions to knowledge exchange.		
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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.

As 2024/25 will be Birkbeck's first year of receiving HEIF funding in several years, we are committed to developing and employing a systematic and transparent approach to manage HEIF funding and monitor the success of KE activities. This framework will ensure alignment with our strategic objectives and the Government's priorities for knowledge exchange, economic growth, and societal impact. Our approach will incorporate robust policies, procedures, and governance mechanisms to oversee HEIF spending, measure progress, evaluate outcomes, and integrate lessons learned into continuous improvement.

Managing HEIF Spending

1. Governance Structure for Oversight:

Birkbeck has established a dedicated Innovation and Commercialisation Board that reports directly to the University Executive Board. This committee will oversee the strategic allocation and monitoring of HEIF funding. It includes representatives from senior leadership, academic schools, and professional services, ensuring broad-based oversight and alignment with institutional priorities. Our newly appointed Deputy Vice Chancellor for Innovation, Knowledge Exchange and Research will lead the growth and governance of this work including setting, measuring and evaluating KPIs.

2. Strategic Planning and Allocation:

HEIF funds have been allocated based on the strategic KE objectives outlined in our institutional strategies. Moving forward, the ICB will review proposals for initiatives to

ensure they meet these objectives and deliver measurable impact. Proposals must include:

- Clear alignment with strategic priorities
- Detailed budgets
- Defined outputs and outcomes
- Risk assessments and mitigation plans

3. Financial Controls and Reporting:

Birkbeck employs rigorous financial controls to manage spending, ensuring accountability and transparency. The Finance Department is represented on, and collaborates with, the ICB to:

- Track expenditure against approved budgets
- Ensure compliance with funder requirements and institutional policies
- Provide termly financial reports to senior leadership

Any deviation from planned spending must be justified and approved by the ICB, ensuring funds are used effectively and strategically.

Measuring Progress

1. Key Performance Indicators:

To track the progress of HEIF-funded activities, Birkbeck will use a set of KPIs aligned with both strategic objectives and government priorities. These KPIs will include:

- **Economic Impact:** Number of businesses supported, revenue generated from partnerships, and commercialisation activities.
- **Student Impact:** Measure of student participation in enterprise programs, and employment outcomes.
- **Community Engagement:** Number of community partnerships, engagement events, and beneficiaries from civic initiatives.
- **Skills Development:** Number of CPD courses delivered, participant numbers, and feedback on learning outcomes.
- **Research Innovation:** Collaborative and contract research projects, patents filed, and knowledge dissemination activities.

2. Regular Monitoring and Reporting:

- **Quarterly Reviews:** The ICB will conduct termly reviews of all HEIF-funded activities. These reviews assess progress against KPIs, budget adherence, and any challenges faced.
- **Progress Reports:** Project leads will be required to submit progress reports outlining achievements, challenges, and next steps. These reports will be compiled and reviewed by ICB to identify trends and areas requiring intervention.

3. Stakeholder Feedback:

- Birkbeck will gather feedback from key stakeholders, including students, industry partners, and community organisations, to gauge the effectiveness of KE activities. This feedback will inform ongoing adjustments and ensures activities meet stakeholder needs and expectations.

Evaluating Outcomes

1. Comprehensive Evaluation Framework:

Birkbeck will employ a structured evaluation framework to assess the outcomes of HEIF-funded activities. This framework will focus on both qualitative and quantitative measures to provide a holistic understanding of impact. Evaluation methods will include:

- **Impact Assessments:** Analysis of the economic, social, and cultural impact of KE activities.
- **Case Studies:** Detailed case studies of successful initiatives to illustrate real-world outcomes and best practices.
- **Benchmarking:** Comparison of outcomes against sector benchmarks and government priorities to ensure competitiveness and relevance.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** For initiatives with long-term goals, Birkbeck will conduct longitudinal studies to track outcomes over time. For example, evaluating the long-term success of student enterprises or the sustained impact of community engagement projects.
- **Reporting and Transparency:** Evaluation outcomes will be documented in annual reports presented to the University Executive Board and shared with relevant government bodies. These reports will highlight:
 - Achievements and successes
 - Challenges encountered and solutions implemented
 - Recommendations for future initiatives

Identifying Lessons Learned

1. Continuous Improvement Cycle:

Birkbeck will integrate lessons learned into a continuous improvement cycle to enhance the effectiveness of KE activities. This cycle includes:

- **Review and Reflection:** After each project, the leads will conduct a review to identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- **Actionable Insights:** Insights from evaluations and stakeholder feedback will be translated into actionable recommendations. These may include changes in project design, resource allocation, or engagement strategies.
- **Implementation of Changes:** Recommendations are implemented in subsequent projects to ensure continuous improvement.

2. Sharing Best Practices:

- Knowledge Sharing Forums: Birkbeck will organise regular forums and workshops to share best practices and lessons learned among academic and professional staff.
- Internal Reports and Case Studies: Best practices and lessons will be documented in internal reports and case studies, serving as a resource for future projects.

3. Adapting to External Changes:

Birkbeck will remain responsive to changes in government priorities and the external environment. The ICB will regularly reviews national policy developments and adjust HEIF-funded activities accordingly.

Birkbeck's approach to managing HEIF funding and monitoring success is underpinned by robust governance, strategic alignment, and a commitment to continuous improvement. By adhering to clear policies and procedures, measuring progress through defined KPIs, evaluating outcomes rigorously, and learning from each initiative, Birkbeck ensures that HEIF funding delivers maximum impact for students, businesses, and the wider community, while supporting the Government's priorities for knowledge exchange and economic growth.