

Transparency of Strategic Institutional Research Funding (SIRF)

Reporting Template for AY 2025-26 Pilot Exercise

INTRODUCTION

This template captures information on the use of your institutions' strategic institutional research funding (SIRF) over the academic year (AY) 2025-26, commencing August 2025. Submissions should be reflective of the whole institution (and not one School, Faculty, Department or individual). SIRF includes all quality-related (QR) funding streams - see our guidance for further information.

Submissions should be made through the survey on [the Research England Data Portal](#), where each higher education provider (HEP) has an individual account to log into.

The deadline for submission is noon on Monday 1st June 2026. This deadline falls before the end of the academic year to allow time to analyse returns and refine the process for a full roll out of the programme from AY 2026-27. Therefore, please include a forecast of uses of SIRF for June and July 2026 in your return.

Please read the guidance document alongside this template. It provides additional information and examples to support you in populating the pilot template. It also explains requirements question-by-question, including those that apply to all providers and those that apply only to some of the providers.

In particular, the requirement related to your answers to questions about activity categories will differ depending on whether your institution is the Pilot Sub-group A or Sub-group B. This static version of the submission template in the form of a PDF file covers both sub-groups, but please note that question 11 in your submission template accessible via the [Research England Data Portal](#) has been tailored accordingly. The circular letter also indicates which sub-group is your HEP in. We have provided more information about this dual approach in the accompanying guidance.

Please also note that this exercise doesn't apply to Research Capital Investment Fund (RCIF) allocations. RCIF uses should not be included in your pilot return.

This is a pilot year and the information that you submit will be used to develop and improve processes, inform our management of SIRF, enhance our evidence base and establish a partial baseline for future years. This template is structured to capture evidence against the principles of SIRF:

- Principle 1: Enable research excellence (pilot form questions number 1 to 14)
Support infrastructure, environment and culture to enable high-quality outputs and impact.
- Principle 2: Contribute towards research sustainability (pilot form question number 15)
Enable HEPs long-term financial and strategic planning.
- Principle 3: Support a healthy research sector (pilot form questions number 16 to 17)

Support the wide range of institutions, research disciplines and missions.

- Principle 4: Address strategic priorities (pilot form question number 18)
Facilitate research responses to current and emerging local, national and global challenges.

See our infographic for more information about our SIRF principles and the associated objectives of the funding: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/strategic-institutional-research-funding-principles-and-assumptions/>

INSTITUTIONAL CONTACT

Name of the higher education provider	
UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN)	
Staff member completing the reporting form Name: Job title: Email address:	
Internal clearance Vice-Chancellor's signature: Date:	

PILOT SUBMISSION QUESTIONS

1. (Mandatory question for all HEPs) Please provide an overarching summary of how SIRF has been used at your institution over the academic year 2025/26. Include key trends, approaches, as well as your main outcomes, successes and challenges related to SIRF. (Max 2000 characters).

Important notes regarding questions 2 to 11

For questions 2 to 11, please provide a detailed breakdown of the research activity areas supported by your institution's SIRF (Strategic Institutional Research Fund) allocation during the 2025–26 academic year. Indicate the percentage (%) of the total annual SIRF allocation spent on each specified activity category, rounded to the nearest whole number.

When answering questions from no 2 to 11, note that for HEP Pilot Sub-group A, the total proportion of SIRF reported must not exceed 100%. Double counting is not permitted where SIRF allocations overlap multiple activity categories. You are encouraged to select the closest matching category when allocating spend. For HEP Pilot Sub-group B, the total percentage of SIRF reported may exceed 100%, though this is not required. Double counting is permitted where allocations overlap multiple categories. Your institution's assigned sub-group is indicated in the circular letter and interactive submission form, available via the RE Data Portal.

Institutions in both pilot sub-groups should report SIRF spending as accurately as possible for the 2025/26 academic year. Provide a percentage of total SIRF allocation, rounded to the nearest whole number, for each relevant category. You do not need to report against categories where no activity was

supported by SIRF. If your institution is unable to provide a breakdown of SIRF usage, please state this clearly.

We recognise that some activities may fit into multiple categories. Institutions are best placed to determine the most appropriate category. Please refer to the guidance document for examples of what might be included under each category.

2. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on early development of research ideas?
3. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on overheads and supporting the wider costs of research projects and related activity funded by research councils and other funders where the funder does not provide 100% of the full economic cost (FEC)?
4. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on salaries of research-active staff and professional services staff?
5. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on professional development of research and professional support/research management staff?
6. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on postgraduate research students including recruitment, training, supervision, and support?
7. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on maintaining and enhancing research infrastructure?
8. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on impact generation activity i.e. knowledge transfer, partnerships focused on impact, and public engagement partnerships to catalyse and collaborate on research activity?
9. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on maintaining and enhancing positive research culture?
10. What percentage of your SIRF allocation has been spent on initiatives aligned with other strategic research priorities of your institution? (Please refer to question 13 to provide us with detail).
11. (Variant of Q11 for sub-group A) Is the total percentage (%) from your answers to questions no 2 to 10 lower than or equal to 100%?

(Variant of Q11 for sub-group B) What is the total percentage (%) from your answers to questions no 2 to 10?
12. (Optional question) List any other SIRF uses not covered above that you wish to highlight (Max 2000 characters).
13. (This question is only for HEPs who reported against the spend category in question 10) If you have included a percentage against the final category, describe the initiatives and strategic priorities supported (Max 2000 characters).

- 14.** (Mandatory question for all HEPs) Provide one narrative example illustrating the use of one of the three funds listed below at your institution over the academic year. Select which fund this example applies to. (Max 2000 characters)
- Policy Support Fund
 - Enhancing Research Culture (ERC) Fund
 - Participatory Research Fund
- Include any known impacts, especially those contributing to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 15.** (This question is only for HEPs in receipt of QR research degree programme supervision fund) Please outline how your institution used the QR research degree programme supervision fund during the academic year. Include any known impacts, especially those contributing to equality, diversity and inclusion. If you did not receive this funding, please write 'not applicable'. (Max 2000 characters).
- 16.** (Mandatory question for all HEPs) Provide one narrative example, illustrating a long-term, defined use of SIRC at your institution that included activity taking place during the 2025-26 academic year. Indicate which SIRC stream(s) supported this activity. Note that SIRC may not have been the sole contributor to the activity. If SIRC was used in combination with other funding sources, please specify this. (Max 2000 characters)
- 17.** (This question is for HEPs in receipt of charity QR and/or business QR) If you receive either the QR charity support fund or QR business research element, provide one narrative example illustrating the use (and impact, if already known) of either of these funds over the academic year. Indicate which SIRC stream(s) were used for this activity. (Max 2000 characters) If you did not receive one of these funds, write 'not applicable'.
- 18.** (This question is only for HEPs in receipt of SPE) If your institution receives the specialist provider element (SPE), outline how it has been used over the academic year. Please also describe the impact, if already known. (Max 2000 characters) If you did not receive the Specialist Provider Element, write 'not applicable'.
- 19.** (Optional question) We are interested in examples of where SIRC has enabled your institution to contribute to addressing regional, national and/or global challenges. If SIRC has enabled your institution to contribute to one or more of them, provide one narrative example. (Max 2000 characters).

PILOT DATA STATEMENT

By submitting this return, you give Research England permission to include your institution's data in a summary of aggregated results of the pilot exercise, which will be published in the second half of 2026. By submitting this return, you also acknowledge that you are providing this data to Research England in confidence.

As a public body, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and all its councils including Research England are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). There are exemptions under the FOI and exceptions under the EIR where we are not

required to provide the information requested. However, if we are unable to apply a FOI exemption or EIR exception, the information that you submit may be released in response to a FOI or EIR request.

All personal data collected via this pilot process will be handled in line with UK data protection legislation. If you would like to know more about how UKRI processes personal data, including how to exercise your rights, please see our [Privacy notice – UKRI](#) and [Data protection policy – UKRI](#)