**Universities Innovation Fund National Priorities**

**University of Edinburgh response, January 2017 – Update for the Period 2017-2018**

The national outcomes for the UIF have been provided for the period AY 2017-20. For AY2017-18, the University of Edinburgh (UoE) will conduct activity in support of delivery of all of the national outcomes. The following update is the UoE specific activities during AY2017-18 related to the national outcomes.

UoE has developed a comprehensive programme of innovation activities, including initiation of substantial improvements to our strategy and operational delivery model. The UoE Innovation programme, with a horizon of 5-10 years, is intended to address the “fundamental re-thinking” desired by SFC in the transition from KTG to UIF, and the wider aspirations of both the University and the Scottish Government under the CAN DO agenda.

Investment and commitment to these plans represent a significant financial commitment by the University, in addition to SFC contribution for these activities. Our plans are, however, dependent on a stable underlying SFC funding environment and the deliverables outlined presume a final funding allocation to the University of Edinburgh, in overall terms and specifically for UIF, consistent with previous awards. Provided that an appropriate funding settlement is reached, the University of Edinburgh also expects to be able to match fund and utilise the Platform Grant of £250k.

UoE is skilled in industry engagement and company formation but our ambition is to innovate and grow this activity apace. The University is seeking to capitalise on the nascent potential of data-driven innovation, ubiquitous across all research themes, to drive regional economic growth. This longer-term focus and priority around data-driven innovation enabled UoE to become the only member of the Alan Turing Institute in the north of Britain. We have invested further in the development of the ecosystem through partnership in the City Region Deal, leading a consortium for the recent BIS Science & Innovation audits and developing our plans for the Learning Mile, including the forthcoming (£41M) Bayes Centre (previously referred to as the Data Technology Institute). This strategy is already creating visible success with the co-location of Intel’s microprocessor design team into Edinburgh, the only such location outside of California. Behind Intel we are developing a strong pipeline of well-known companies who have expressed interest in co-locating in the Bayes Centre or supporting these Programmes. These developments have led to a renewed focus with industry and other partners around data-driven innovation, not just around Informatics but across all 3 Colleges.

Furthermore, realising the importance to innovation of broader industry engagement, changes have taken place within the University’s innovation partner Edinburgh Research and Innovation (ERI), including during 2016 the appointment of a new leadership and executive team with significant industry and out of Scotland experience, with new capacity to be proactive in developing valuable new relationships with companies large and small. ERI’s plans include new programmes in support of the University’s outstanding staff and students in their entrepreneurial and commercial endeavours.

New activities, enabled by the UIF, include the increased collaboration and development/sharing of good practice with colleagues in the Scottish University sector. In discussion with Scottish Funding Council we have agreed that the best mechanism, at a sector level to deliver the national outcomes, is to undertake to work together to:

* Analyse current activity and identify best practice
* On the basis of this, where appropriate, devise and execute a pilot programme
* If successful, develop/initiate a sector-wide programme.

Through the Research and Commercialisation Directors’ Group (RCDG) each university has agreed to contribute to various outcomes. Each university notes and acknowledges the importance of each of the outcomes but for the best use of resource, each institution will be involved with a different combination of collaborative work. UoE/ERI has offered its resources to participate in each working group aligned with Outcomes for UIF AY 2017 -2020 and expects to make a significant contribution to Priority Areas (PA) PA1, PA2, PA3, PA4 and PA7 during AY 2017 - 2018.

***Outcome one (demand stimulation and PA5): working with Scotland’s enterprise agencies, Scottish Government, business networks, Interface, and others, Scottish HEIs will have helped to increase the demand and quality of engagement from businesses and the public sector for university services. And Outcome three (simplification/greater innovation and PA3, PA4 and PA7): in partnership with the EAs and Interface, Scottish HEIs will, at a national level, have made strategic use of their sectoral knowledge to promote greater innovation in the economy (including beyond non-STEM).***

ERI continues to host Interface and to meet with the Interface team to discuss joint initiatives that are designed to include Scotland’s SMEs, and to learn of any emerging thematic area where the SME community are looking to access skills and knowledge. By enhancing understanding of the SME market ‘pull’, ERI can improve current activities such as its AIMday events, and consider how to construct new activities attractive to SMEs.

As stated above, we are participating in both the City & Region Deal and the BIS Science and Innovation Audit processes to attract further external funding to the region, supporting new demand creation and opportunities for business and our regional public agencies. In addition, resources will be assigned to work with industry partners to jointly exploit the UK Industrial Strategy Fund.

Our industry propositions are subject of continuous development whilst seeking to exploit the synergy between the University, students, companies, talented management and venture finance in driving innovation and economic growth. A dedicated team is focused externally on identifying new strategic partnerships with large, global organisations recognising they have the R&D resources and need which can best exploit the highlighted synergy, and potentially integrate our SME partners in to the supply chain. Industrial engagement is optimised by recognising thematically strong areas which have a strategic fit with both the academic and industrial domains. We are working to distil propositions that meet this criterion with the addition and leadership of senior industry figures in Entrepreneur in Residence roles. This approach will help stimulate new and significant demand, with the approach itself being replicable.

In addition to the regional focus, we will participate in Scotland-wide discussions on the shape of support from organisations such as Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Funding Council through RCDG, Universities Scotland and our own engagements with these organisations, and in dialogue with the Industry Liaison Groups.

***Outcome two (simplification/commercialization PA6, PA7 and PA8): in partnership with the Enterprise Agencies (EAs) and Interface, Scottish HEIs as a sector will have demonstrably simplified business access to the knowledge and expertise in Scottish universities.***

ERI is the primary interface between the University and industry, which includes public and third sector organisations. An ongoing core activity of the ERI services is to ensure they continuously evolve to meet demands and are easy to access by all internal and external users. A new initiative is “digital first” where ERI is putting support, programme content and processes online for 24 hour increased access and effectiveness gains through self-service.

ERI has committed to work collaboratively with Scotland university colleagues across the UIF prioritised outcomes, to share good practice and develop new initiatives to improve efficiency and scale of knowledge transfer and access to university resources.

***Outcome four (entrepreneurialism and PA1 and PA2): Scottish HEIs as a sector will have made a significant and positive change in the way entrepreneurial opportunities are promoted and delivered to students, HEI staff, and businesses.***

Our extensive entrepreneurial and innovation support services to staff, students and businesses delivered from ERI, will be promoted through a range of channels [including digital] to best highlight the opportunities and to optimise the impact delivered, in particular from potentially forming new high-growth companies.  Innovative approaches will be used to allow staff to engage with entrepreneurial projects and new companies emerging from the University’s labs.  ERI facilitated engagement with the ecosystem will provide opportunities for staff and student entrepreneurs and new companies to connect to key networks.  We [the University and ERI] will continue to be a leading participator in Scotland Can Do and other national and regional strategies and will be active in groups and initiatives promoting enterprise, growth and investment, including those focused on social enterprise.

Specifically in AY2017-18, we will:

* Through Launch.ed, continue to support under- and postgraduate entrepreneurs delivering a range of advice services, mentoring, networking and learning events including the 3DayStart-up (and intensive 3 day hackathon), Bootcamps (an intensive 2-part workshop, which covers a wide range of enterprise issues on a very practical level, available to both students and staff); Pitching for Mentors and the Virtual Board series;
* Continue to drive uptake in Enterprise Fellowships, working closely with RSE, BBSRC, RAE and SE to optimise both quantity and quality of Fellowship appointments and to enhance Fellows’ experience both in terms of delivering valuable career skills and driving high quality new company outcomes;
* Deliver a student business plan competition which feeds into the national Converge Challenge competition;
* Embed the operating relationship between the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Sciences and Roslin Technologies, delivering high-growth company formation support and investment to enterprise opportunities emerging from this world-class facility;
* Further develop the next phase of the BioQuarter / Sunergos initiative, driving and incubating new company formation based around the world-class research and skills of the Edinburgh Medical School; regular networking and early project scoping with the venture capital community to triage potential spin out projects and focus internal expectations and experiences;
* Working with EU H2020 SME Instrument, Innovate UK Small Business Research Initiative and Scottish Enterprise High Growth Unit to accelerate the formation off, and strengthen early development of, spin out companies;
* Grow participation in the Enterprise stream of the Edinburgh Award, which recognises extra-curricular achievements in the field of enterprise by the University’s students;
* Build the recognition of students’ entrepreneurial activities through the Student Led Individually Created Courses programme, a curriculum innovation to award academic credit for students’ experiences and development;
* Continue to nurture the University’s entrepreneurial communities through the Business School’s ‘eClub’, which brings perspective entrepreneurs together with each other, and potential mentors and investors through a programme of events, workshops and pitching competitions;
* Continue leadership of Informatics Ventures, delivering initiatives and programmes at the University and others around Scotland, including the IVTuesday Talk series and the developments support for presenting companies at Engage Invest Exploit, Informatics Ventures international investment conference series;
* At the Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation, deliver the Low Carbon Ideas Lab to enterprising innovators from the University’s student and staff base, and from entrepreneurs in the wider enterprise ecosystem;
* Build further on the University’s unique investment activities in early-stage ventures through Old College Capital, and in partnership with Epidarex Capital and others, investigating opportunities in see and pre-seed as well social investment;
* Lead the evolution of phase 2 of the Enterprise Campus, with the University of Strathclyde and the University of Aberdeen, supporting postgraduate student entrepreneurs at all Scottish universities;
* Continue to deliver initiatives through the Informatics Ventures program for Scotland’s Universities and other organisations. This will include the IVTuesday seminar series and the Engage Invest Exploit program which mentors and prepares Scottish tech entrepreneurs to pitch to and engage with investors primarily via EIE Scotland.
* Embed entrepreneurship activity in new Innovation Hubs e.g. the new Bayes Centre focussed on data-driven innovation.

***Outcome five (international and PA11): in partnership with Scottish Development International, Connected Scotland and others, Scottish HEIs will have pooled their knowledge and networks, and shared good practice to promote and engage Scotland internationally (operating under Scotland’s International Framework).***

ERI on behalf of the University will continue to support SDI and others with hosting of international visits to Edinburgh; to host events where the University and as appropriate regional and all of Scotland capability is showcased. Data-driven innovation, and the opportunities to promote Edinburgh as a global destination of choice for organisations that power services through the application of data science, is becoming a key focus area as part of a joint initiative to Evangelise Edinburgh.

The University’s strategy includes an increase to all international activities including collaboration, commercial and industry related activities. ERI will share its success and emerging good practise including appropriate international contact information from e.g. its initiative to support the expansion of these activities in China.

In addition, the University and ERI will continue with UIF activities comprising:

* EU supported programmes such as the ‘Fortissimo Market Place’ – an initiative to establish a vehicle whereby companies can get access to high performance computing. We will promote these mechanisms through ERI and other channels including working with Interface;
* ERI representatives will support the University’s International Office events in key partner countries and cities such as India and San Francisco. Through such events new contacts will be made that will be relevant to Scottish businesses, and UoE through ERI will ensure that the information is made available;
* Through Engage Invest Exploit we will support platforms such as EIE-London, an annual showcase for A-round level growth companies, which will attract a large Venture Capital and Corporate Capital audience.

***Outcome six (inclusive growth and social impact and PA11): Building on current and good practice Scottish HEIs will have scaled up their support of the Scottish Government’s ambitions for inclusive growth.***

The University’s Strategic Plan 2016 commits the university to building and strengthening relationships and information exchange between the University, the city and our communities. We will do this by engaging the public in research, and working with civic and community partners to enhance health and well-being, education, culture and quality of life. Through our partnership in the Beltane Public Engagement Network, we will continue to organise public engagement events like [Explorathon Edinburgh](http://www.explorathon.co.uk/edinburgh) and the [Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas](http://codi.beltanenetwork.org/).  We will work with the annual science and cultural festivals in Edinburgh and Scotland. We will also develop further the concept of using the University and City as a Living Lab partnership to investigate social problems and help develop solutions through research and practice; with individual academic projects such as the Edinburgh Cityscope project using research and innovation to transform the way the public interact with their environs through smartphone technology, and research into history, geology and art.

***Outcome seven (equality and diversity PA10): Building on current and good practice HEIs will have ensured positive promotion of equality and diversity in staff and all who are affected by the use of the UIF.***

In addition to development of a new programme promoting social enterprise, the University is reviewing its Equality Outcomes and those covering 2017-21 will be published in mid-2017. The current outcomes and overall Equality and Diversity strategy are available at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/strategy-action-plan>. The Strategic Plan 2016 also outlines our commitment to ‘maintain a fair, inclusive and diverse community of students and staff, enriching the learning, working and social experience of all and demonstrating our commitment to social justice.’

Specifically in relation to our innovation activities, the University including its programmes and subsidiaries will include promotion and compliance with the University’s Equality and Diversity strategy.

**Appendix A Equality Impact Assessment Template – Completed Template**



**Equality Impact Assessment**

The University’s EqIA Policy Statement and Guidance and Checklist Notes, along with further information and resources, are available at [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment)

EqIA covers policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as ‘policy/practice’ hereinafter.

|  |
| --- |
| **A.** Policy/Practice: University’s Innovation and Commercialisation Strategy |
| **B.** Reason for Equality Impact Asessment:   * Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice at time of the SFC UIF submission for period AY2017-2018 |
| **C.** Person responsible for the policy area or practice:  Name: Gordon Donald  Job title: Chief Operating Officer  School/service/unit: Edinburgh Research and Innovation |
| **D.** An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any if the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:   * affects primary or high level functions of the University * is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty ‘needs’ as set out in the Policy and Guidance)? * It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA?   Yes |
| **E.** Equality Groups  To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant:   * Age * Disability * race (including ethnicity and nationality) * religion or belief * sex * sexual orientation * gender reassignment * pregnancy and maternity   This policy applies to all and is not specific to any particular equality group. For example, it aims to promote entrepreneurial opportunities to students, HEI staff, and businesses, regardless of protected their protected characteristic, ensuring equality of opportunity between different groups.  However, the internationalisation aspects may have a positive impact for race/religion and belief groups. | |
| **F.** Equality Impact Assessment Outcome  No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.  The University has been engaged in delivery of this policy for some considerable time and it has evolved to be all inclusive with services from ERI being promoted and available on an equal basis across all of the University. | |
| **G.** Action and Monitoring  When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?  Review of this policy will be in line with the University annual review and planning process.  At this stage we do not believe that this policy will not discriminate against any equality groups and will instead promote equality, and attract a diverse group of students, staff and business. Monitoring will be ongoing to ensure action is taken should any adverse effect be discovered, including change to promotion activities to promote entrepreneurial opportunities for any underrepresented equality group. | |
| **H.** Publication of EqIA  Can this EqIA be published in full, now? Yes  This form accompanies the University’s SFC UIF submission for the period AAY2017-2018. | |
| **I.** Sign-off  EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)):  Accepted by: Gordon Donald  Date: 26th January 2017 | |

[equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk](mailto:equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk)