



**Queen Margaret  
University**  
EDINBURGH

**QMU  
Knowledge Exchange  
and Innovation Fund  
5-Year Strategy  
(2025-2030)**

June 2025

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## Section A: Overview

### Institutional Context

Queen Margaret University (QMU) is a small, agile, ambitious modern university focused on professionally orientated learning and teaching, applied Research, Knowledge Exchange, and Innovation (RKE&I). Our Knowledge Exchange & Innovation (KE&I) activity reflects our academic portfolio of healthcare, social sciences, creative arts, business, management and enterprise, and teacher education.

Our applied approach ensures that activity centres on professional practice, policy and service transformation, cultural and creative enquiry, and social justice, with practitioners, policymakers, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), and service users at the forefront of our collaborations.

We value the impact of the arts, social sciences and creative practice on everyday lives and recognise that KE&I in Health, Care and Wellbeing overlap with culture and connected communities.

Technology/digital transformation is changing how care is delivered, offering the most transformative opportunity the health and social care sectors have faced this century. Through disruptive new Further Education/Higher Education (FE/HE) collaboration in entrepreneurship and Community Wealth Building (CWB) and by elevating skills as an innovation pathway, we plan to accelerate our KE&I activity, aligning with City Deal and national innovation infrastructure, including our near-completed [Innovation Hub](#), to access funding and support. Building on established collaborations and understanding the specific innovation needs of the sectors we serve, we aim to reframe entrepreneurial career pathways and harness new opportunities, enabling a paradigm shift in the KE&I space QMU occupies in Scotland.

Our KE&I Strategy aligns with four interdisciplinary challenge-led areas aligned to the following Scottish Government Priorities:

- Health, Care and Wellbeing for all at all ages
- Culture and Creative Industries
- Social Justice and Social Innovation
- Food and Drink

Diagram 1: QMU Strategic KE&I Profile



## Overview of Strategic Ambitions

### Our 5 Year KEIF Strategy incorporates the following:

- Skills Development.
- Service and Policy Innovation through redesign and transformation - promoting new thinking and innovation in local, national, and global public policy.
- Transforming Practice through working with practitioner communities (e.g. health and care, culture and creative industries, local government, education) to provide tools based on applied research to advance and improve practice.
- Entrepreneurship.
- Applied/market-ready research for SMEs in Food and Drink and the Health, Care and Wellbeing economies.
- Developing person-centred digital health and care technologies.
- Public participation and community engagement.

### Our priorities are:

- Growing our distinctive, co-produced contract research and consultancy through widened public, SME, community, and stakeholder engagement.
- Enhancing FE/HE collaboration and CWB, augmenting the critical role of skills and entrepreneurship as a route to innovation to unlock growth in the sectors we serve and strengthening regional cohesion.
- Maximising the three-way interplay between research, KE&I, and learning and teaching to develop entrepreneurial mindsets.
- Developing stronger integration with our learning and teaching, widening access, employability, and international strategies.

### Through these activities, we aim to:

- Reframe Health, Care and Wellbeing as an asset in Scotland's economy via the policy lenses of innovation, digital, entrepreneurship and people-centred economic policy.
- Elevate the critical role of skills and build new collaborative FE/HE innovation pathways.
- Promote understanding of the heterogenous innovation needs of our priority economic sectors and the required underpinning entrepreneurial ecosystem (dominated by SMEs).
- Celebrate the value of and enhance support for employee-owned, owner-practitioner microenterprises.

## Alignment to Scottish Government Priorities

We will focus on the areas where we have distinct strengths and infrastructure and the potential to make the most significant difference. We will achieve this by ensuring that our KE&I continues to be co-designed and co-produced with external collaborators, rooted in our applied research, embedded in our curricula, and engaged with Innovation Hub tenants. That activity will focus on the priorities outlined within the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF) and the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as illustrated in the following diagrams.

Diagram 2: Alignment of QMU KEIF Strategy to Scottish Government NPF and the UN SDGs

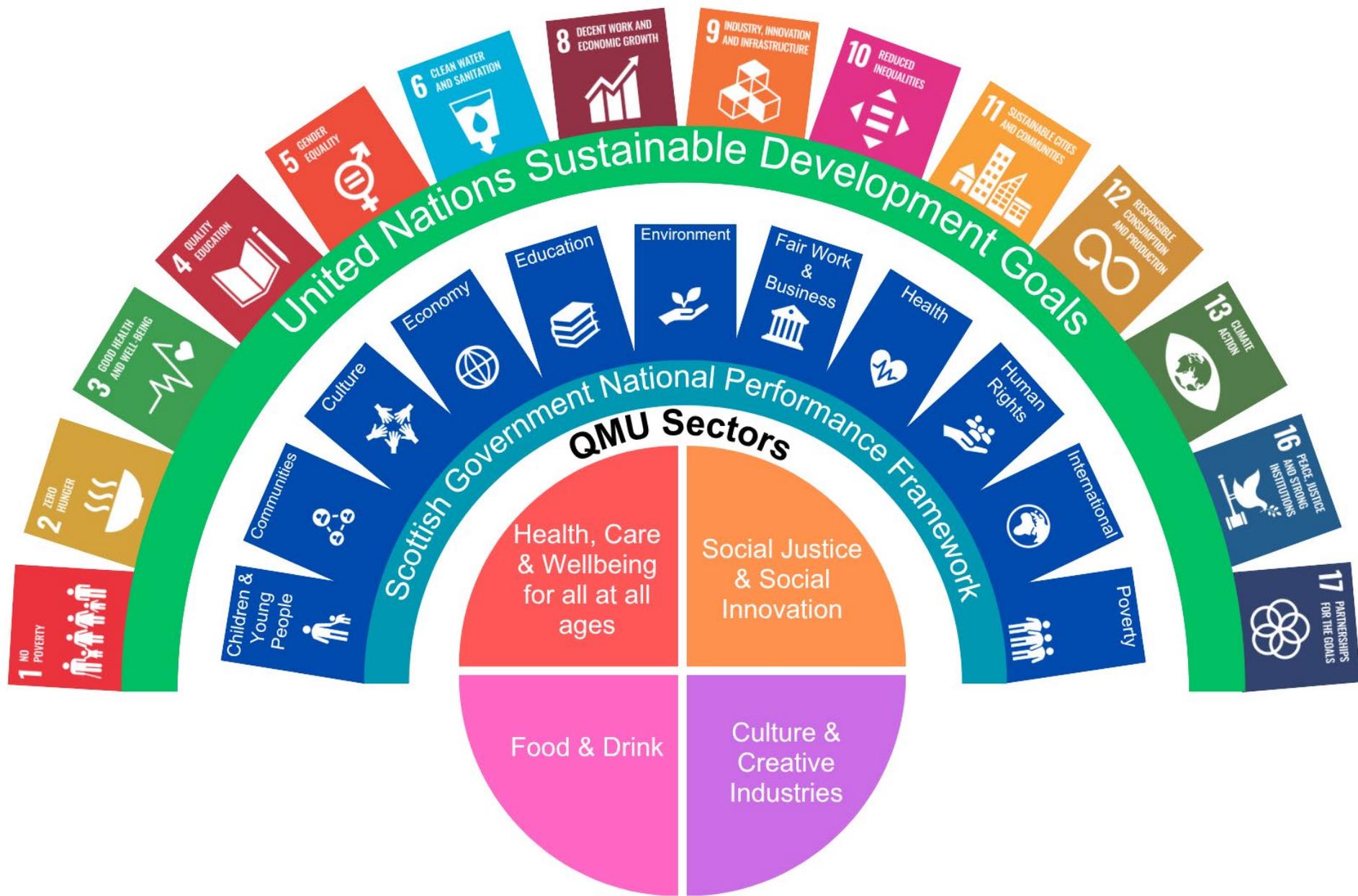
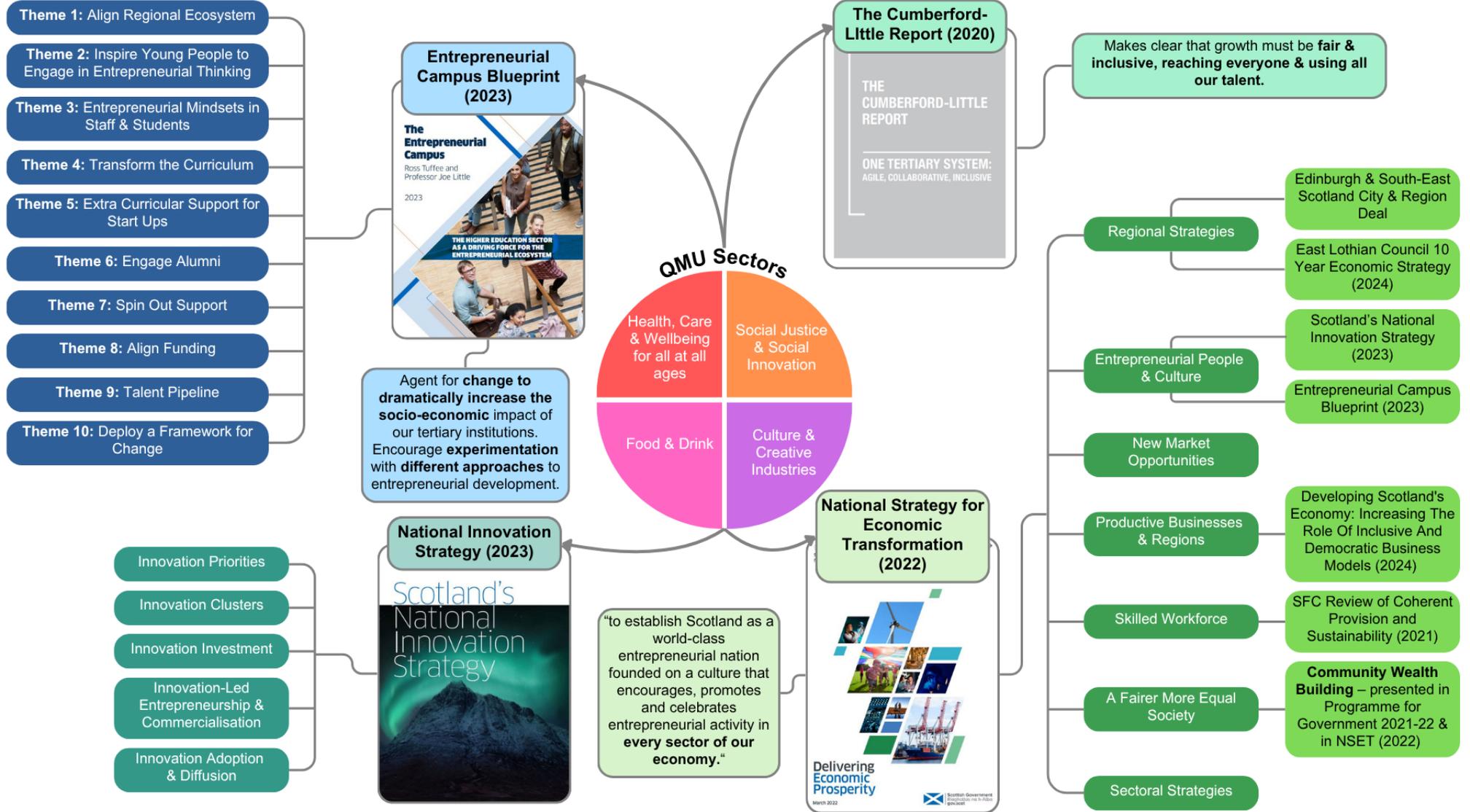


Diagram 3: QMU Strategic Alignment with Scottish Government Policies



## Section B: KE&I Capacity

### Platform Grant

The Platform Grant will be supported by continued QMU-matched funding, providing investment for the basic but critical infrastructure required to support our KE&I.

#### The investment will continue to support:

- Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Unit.
- Research Grants and Contracts Unit.
- Marketing and Communications.
- Infrastructure to promote our broader commitment to open KE&I, including outputs, data, and an open campus space.

#### This provides stability and multi-year provision of core services, including:

- Infrastructure to maintain capacity and capability.
- Essential professional service function to embed good practice, governance, and assurance.
- Horizon scanning, external collaboration brokering and strategic alliances.
- KEIF-related press, public relations, marketing, digital communication, and our institutional repository.
- Disseminating our KE&I to maximise impact, reach, and significance.
- Making our campus open and accessible to the community and external stakeholders.
- Underpinning infrastructure to develop our external interface to elevate our KE&I profile, ensuring a compelling demand-led narrative aligned with the Scottish Government NPF.
- Support for public, policymaker, service-user, community, and public engagement.
- Environmental justice and achieving the transition to sustainable practices and impact.
- Central contact point for SME enquiries.

## Overall Capacity for KE&I

**Estimated number of staff (Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)) directly supported by KEIF:** 3.8 FTE – KE support and industry-facing technicians.

#### External KEIF Funded Services:

- Intellectual Property (IP) Expertise and Support – University of St Andrews
- Start-Up and Entrepreneurial Support – Edinburgh Napier University

#### Additional non-funded externally leveraged Support:

- Public Engagement – Edinburgh Beltane Collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University and Edinburgh Napier University.
- Start-Up and Business Advice – East Lothian Business Gateway Service (on-campus).

Estimate of staff who have KE&I as a significant part of their role: *Except for the dedicated KE Manager, all roles have a remit across RKE&I and transcend staff and student activities.*

#### Academic and Leadership Roles:

Deputy Principal	Deans of School x 2
Directors of Research and KE Centres x 6	School Research and KE Co-ordinators x 2
Convenor of the Enterprise and Innovation Network	Head of the Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation (SCFDI)

#### Professional Service Roles

Director of Research and KE	Research and KE Administration Officer
KE Manager	Research Grants and Contracts Advisor
Research and KE Fellow	Finance Business Partners x 3
Senior Research and KE Officer	Food Technologists and New Product Development Technicians x 3

## Section C: Outcome Grant Activities

### KE Metric Activity

#### QMU Ambitions and Approaches to SFC 5-Year KE Metric Activity and Alignment to Scottish Government Priorities.

QMU ambitions will focus on the following priority investments:

##### Strategic Focus:

1. Position QMU as a regional lead in CWB and growing Inclusive, Democratic Business Models (IDBMs).
2. Embed QMU Startup Studio and Bright Red Triangle (BRT) Entrepreneurial Collaboration with Edinburgh Napier University and Edinburgh College.
3. Launch of “QMU Consulting”.
4. Continue to invest in the Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation (SCFDI).
5. Progress a major new strategic FE/HE alliance to drive alignment with Skills as an Innovation Pathway – focused on reframing Health, Care and Wellbeing as a national innovation asset and aligned to technology/digital transformation.

##### Underpinning Investments:

1. Enhance capacity in QMU RKE Professional Service Infrastructure including via shared services with other institutions.
2. Invest in QMU Research and KE Centres and Schools.
3. Ongoing support for priority long-term investments, including our collaborative industry-focused entrepreneurial training programmes, THRIVE and SHIFT, and public, policy and civic engagement.

##### Additionality of KEIF (Health, Care and Wellbeing, Food and Drink, Creative Industries, Tourism and Service Innovation):

1. Enables capacity and capability building in priority economic sectors, dominated by SMEs (98% of Scottish economy), in often complex markets and source of 1 in 2 Scottish private sector jobs and where alignment with skills, service and social innovation is often a critical innovation pathway. Service sectors account for 75% of the Scottish economy. Despite a growing emphasis on Fair Work in Scotland, the gig economy remains absent from national measures yet defines the ecosystem in many of these sectors.

2. Increases effectiveness of local interventions to improve understanding of the specific innovation needs and entrepreneurial ecosystem of these sectors – focused on existing structures, and organisations such as the NHS, charities and IDBMs.
3. Creates a collaborative KE-enabling culture by stimulating collegiality, regional value creation and maximising impact and overspill from untraded KE interdependencies – soft infrastructure, relationships, networks, digital transformation and literacy, changing entrepreneurial mindsets and re-shaping the future curriculum and skills development.
4. Progresses the development, alignment, and delivery of KEIF 5 Year Strategy with East Lothian Local Economic Strategy via people-centred models of economic development aligned with mission and place.

##### Additional Institutional KPIs:

Assert for recognition of the economic importance of capturing start-ups that don't make 3 years, valuing all models of entrepreneurship, impact on the curriculum, entrepreneurial mindsets, student experience, increased FE/HE collaboration, traction in non-Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) priority economic sectors, enhancing KE culture, service and social outcomes.

See Diagram 4 and Diagram 5.

Diagram 4: QMU 5 Year KEIF Strategy Overview

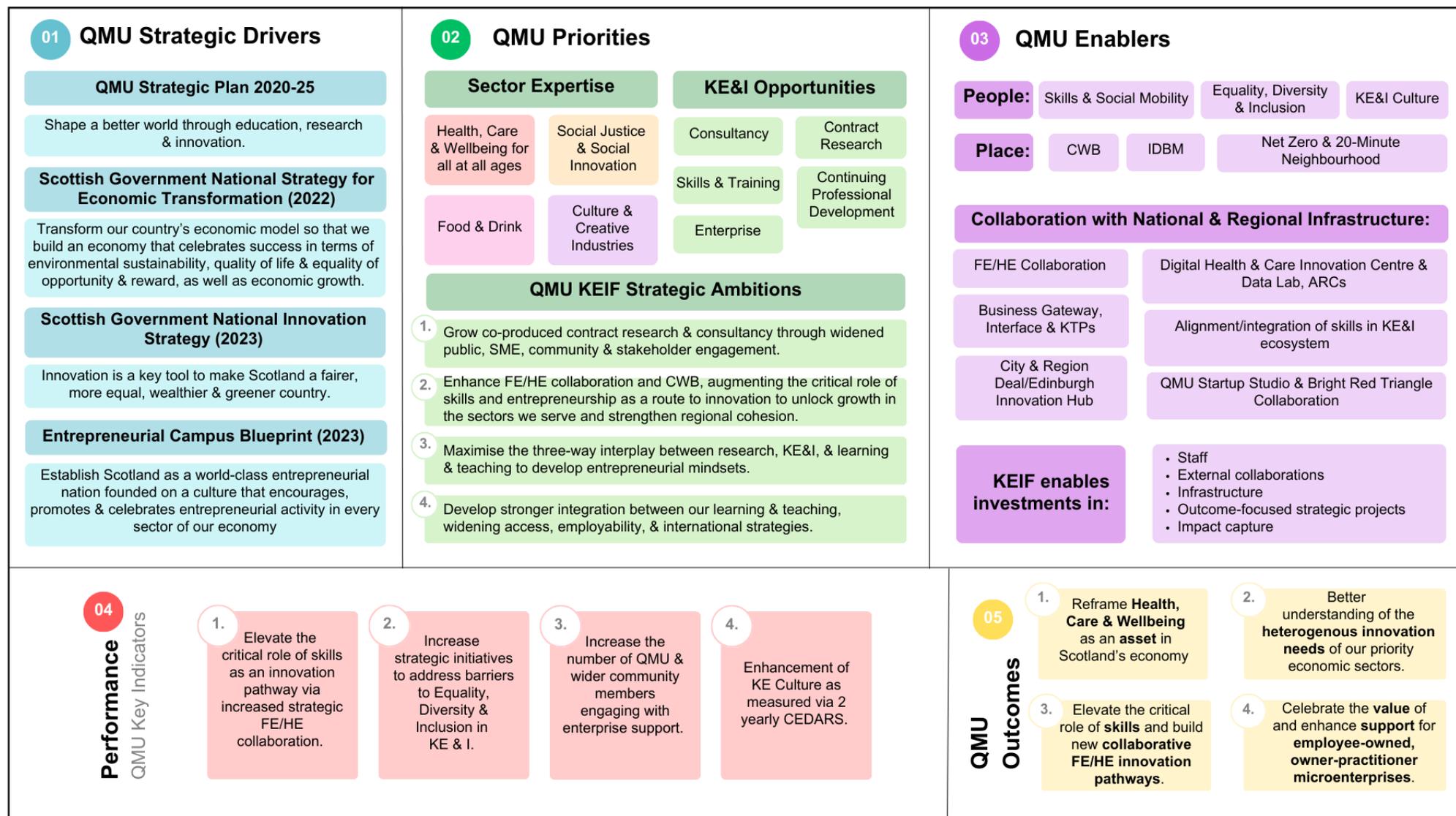


Diagram 5: QMU 5 Year KEIF Enabling Activities and Metrics

QMU Area of KEIF Investment	CWB & IDBM	QMU Startup Studio and BRT	QMU Consulting	SCFDI	FE/HE Collaboration	Research & KE Centres	Professional Services
<b>KEIF SCF Key Performance Indicators</b>							
1. Grow Enterprise Funding	●	●	●	●			
2. Grow Consultancy Funding		●	●	●	●	●	●
3. Grow CPD Funding		●	●	●	●	●	●
4. Maintain Research Funding						●	●
5. Grow Start-Ups (>3 years old)	●	●		●			●
6. Maintain Spin Outs				●		●	●
<b>QMU Additional Metrics</b>							
7. Elevate the role of skills as an innovation pathway via increased FE/HE collaboration (focus on Health, Care & Wellbeing)	●	●			●	●	
8. Increase strategic initiatives to address barriers to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in KE&I	●	●	●		●	●	●
9. Increase the number of QMU and wider community members engaging with enterprise support via the QMU Startup Studio	●	●			●	●	
10. Enhance KE Culture		●			●	●	●

# Graduate Start-ups and Spin-outs/ Entrepreneurial Support

## Priorities

- **Skills** as an innovation pathway via **FE/HE collaboration**.
- Shaping **entrepreneurial mindsets/transformation of the curriculum, campus, and culture**.
- Understand and support **innovation/entrepreneurship within existing systems, structures, and organisations** e.g., service transformation, policy diffusion, personalised care.
- **Entrepreneurship for Social Mobility**.
- **CWB** and **IDBMs**.
- **Rebalancing** the dominating high growth/spin-out narrative – supporting small, medium, micro, owner-practitioner, and gig economy ecosystems (98% of the Scottish economy).
- **Reframing Entrepreneurship** in Health, Care and Wellbeing.

**Through collaboration, we aim to lead** a “framework for change” in line with the ambitions and recommendations of the Scottish Government (2023) Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint, National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and Developing Scotland’s Economy: Increasing the Role of IDBMs (2024), specifically:

- **“Disruptive and visionary new FE/HE approach to place-based collaboration** through aligning skills, innovation and entrepreneurship in Scotland.”
- **“Dramatically increase the socio-economic** impact of tertiary education ...encourage **experimentation** with **different approaches** to entrepreneurial development.”
- “Establish Scotland as a world-class entrepreneurial nation in **every sector of our economy**.”
- **“Advance national service offerings to develop social entrepreneurship** and harness the power of innovation pathways to develop high-quality spin-outs.”
- **“CWB not only as a tool to achieve a well-being economy** for the nation, but an economic approach which could address systemic issues.”
- **“Significantly increase the number of social enterprises**, employee-owned businesses and co-operatives in Scotland, supporting regeneration and the wealth of local communities.”

- “Mainstreaming of IDBMs as the “golden thread” in Scotland’s economic strategies and work of its agencies.”
- “Increase IDBMs in the Scottish economy by 2034 from 7000 to 21000.”

## KEIF Investment

Our new KEIF-funded three-year collaboration brings Edinburgh Napier University’s BRT enterprise support service and Startup Studio to QMU and Edinburgh College, building on QMU’s long-term alliance with East Lothian Council via the Business Gateway service.

## Ambition

1. Reframe **Health, Care and Wellbeing** as an asset in Scotland’s economy via the policy lenses of innovation, digital and entrepreneurship strategies.
2. Strengthen regional capacity and provide a novel and **transformative FE/HE infrastructure** across a unique cross-institutional, multi-intersectoral disciplinary portfolio.
3. Drive **entrepreneurship and skills as an innovation pathway** in sectors vital to the Scottish economy.

## Approach

1. Build on existing infrastructure and leverage future EU and UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment.
2. Understand the specific and heterogeneous entrepreneurial and innovation needs of high-priority economic sectors that are a significant source of employment.
3. Work at the intersection of RKE&I, Learning and Teaching, Widening Access, and Employability to shape future graduate entrepreneurial mindsets.
4. Progress collaborative approaches to unlocking entrepreneurship via the curriculum, including a new Entrepreneurial Playbook/Toolkit embedded across the partner institutions.

## In addition, we will continue to:

- Invest in our flagship collaborative, industry-focused entrepreneurial training programmes:
  - [SHIFT \(Creative Industries\)](#) with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Glasgow School of Art.
  - [THRIVE \(Food and Drink\)](#) with Scottish Rural Universities and Colleges.
- Consolidate and maximise impact from our existing spin-out companies - predominantly community interest companies.

## Section D: Wider KE&I Activities

### Wider Societal Impact

KEIF underpins and enables our regional anchor institutions' role in supporting social, economic, and cultural well-being. At the forefront of our ambition is our drive to:

- Position QMU as a regional lead in **CWB** and growing **IDBMs** and **build** on our specialist expertise in practice, public and user engagement, lived experience, and co-creation in service innovation and transformation.
- Use FE/HE collaboration to strengthen alliances with leading actors in the Scottish KE&I ecosystem to push the boundaries of purposeful funding interventions to **accelerate innovation pathways** based on the needs of the priority sectors of Health, Care and Wellbeing, Food and Drink, and Culture and Creative Industries.
- Elevate the critical role of **entrepreneurship as a tool and solution** for social mobility and environmental and economic democracy through alignment with CWB initiatives such as 20-minute neighbourhoods and wealth retention in connected communities.
- Reframe sectors such as **Health, Care and Wellbeing, and Culture and Creative Industries** as innovation assets, positively impacting regional economies and producing highly skilled graduates who are work-ready, confident about their future, and prepared to become active and engaged citizens.
- Attract funding for **applied, participatory and complex interventions** to increase service and policy innovation and promote and grow IDBMs to reflect their intrinsic and adept capability to drive transformation in our economy, distribute wealth, connect communities and be purposeful in supporting people, place, and net zero.

KEIF investment will prioritise:

- **Service, Policy and Practice Innovation** - Working with practitioner communities (health and care, culture and creative industries, policymaking, local government, charities, education) to provide transformative tools and interventions based on applied research to advance and improve practice and drive inclusive economic growth.

- The **co-design and production of new ideas, methods**, and processes in the sectors that we serve - implementing personalised care and increasing service user engagement from marginalised groups demands radically different types of innovation that will grow and spread in alternative ways, as well as different framing, language, implementation, and adoption.
- **Interventions for new career pathways** to support Health, Care and Wellbeing innovation as an asset to Scotland's economy.
- **New CWB and IDBM initiatives and alliances** as the engine of our approach to economic development that starts with people's needs and assets to provide jobs, skills development, well-being, sustainability, and quality care at the very heart of communities.
- Activities that **leverage additional UK and EU funding**, such as UK Government Strength in Places, Shared Prosperity, and EU Funding.
- Infrastructure to **support dissemination and improved impact capture** and husbandry to evidence the reach and significance of our work.
- Investment aligned with the **evolving model of QMU Consulting** – Consulting projects within our areas of expertise using applied, participatory, and complex interventions will provide opportunities to apply research and expertise to real-world problems, potentially significantly impacting society.
- **Promoting KE progressive cultures** within QMU and beyond, where the virtues of IDBMs and non-traditional business models play a pivotal and acknowledged role.

## Collaboration

### Ambition

Collaboration is fundamental to QMU's commitment to realising the Scottish Government's NPF. We will champion a meaningful understanding of our specific sectors' entrepreneurial/innovation ecosystem, advocating for a more coordinated, joined-up policy, innovation, research, skills, and training landscape in Scotland.

### Approach

- **Differentiate ourselves as a partner of choice**

Be exemplary in our approach to be the partner of choice; focus on a sharper, demand-led interdisciplinary articulation of our KE&I strengths in applied research, participatory and complex interventions; and firmly align with our purpose as a small, modern University.

- **Contribute to a more cohesive KE&I system**

Build on long-term collaborations with Business Gateway, Interface, East Lothian Council, NHS, Royal Society of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Beltane for Public Engagement; and strengthen new KE&I alliances with FE, East of Scotland Knowledge Transfer Partnership Centre, Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre, Data Lab, and the Scottish Alliance for Food. We work closely with the SFC KE&I Collaborations Manager and are a proactive partner in Scottish Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Mentoring; and we look forward to engaging with the new Research Culture Collaboration Manager.

We will apply new thinking, ideas, policy, and practice by connecting diverse voices to ensure stakeholders are better positioned to tackle significant societal challenges and build a better future for Scotland.

- **Regional Cohesion and Infrastructure**

Strengthen academic alignment with our City and Region Deal ambitions, including the [Edinburgh Innovation Hub](#) and broader regional infrastructure, including Heriot-Watt University National Robotarium and Global Research Institute in Health and Care Technologies.

- **Push boundaries via experimentation and novel approaches as a framework for change**

Use our agility and ambition as a small modern University to challenge, shape and embrace different models of collaboration and sustainable innovation, including ongoing investment in THRIVE and SHIFT; our pioneering QMU Startup Studio and BRT Entrepreneurial partnership with Edinburgh Napier University and Edinburgh College; and our 13-year collaboration with our on-campus East Lothian Business Gateway, which together enable our role as a CWB anchor institution.

QMU actively promotes the utilisation of Intellectual Property (IP) to achieve broader social and economic benefits and maximise the impact of RKE&I. KEIF will continue to support our unique 7-year collaboration with the University of St Andrews in the provision of back-office IP and exploitation of new products processes, services and know-how, and pave the way for the adoption of national infrastructure to support a shared Technology Transfer Office function in Scotland, in line with UKRI/Research England.

- **Understand the specific innovation needs of Food and Drink SMEs**

Our SCFDI will continue to pioneer the application of unique, market-ready RKE&I solutions for the Food and Drink sector via strong collaborations with SMEs to support their needs and a rich practice-based understanding of the complex market and supply-chain that differentiates innovation in this sector. We will build on our partnership with the University of Edinburgh to support the ongoing commercial exploitation of IP relating to alternatives to Palm Oil.

## Regional Approaches

- **Position QMU as a regional lead in CWB and IDBMs.**
- **FE/HE Collaboration – QMU expertise in Health, Care and Wellbeing and responding to the broader societal challenge of “Health and Social Care.”**

We will maximise all opportunities arising from our role as a regional anchor institution. CWB holds immense promise for QMU and is central to our KEIF vision in responding to NSET and Scottish Government ambitions to grow IDBMs significantly.

By leveraging collective expertise, we can drive innovation, create jobs, and enable economic democracy and environmental and social justice. At the heart of this challenge lies the ability to connect communities, understand policy and practice, and anticipate the skills that will be in demand in the coming years. FE/HE partnerships are critical in preparing the workforce to unlock future innovation needs.

We will use KEIF to broker and strengthen strategic FE/HE partnerships with Government, learned societies, policymakers, industry, and public, private and third sectors to provide a platform to ensure that these partnerships are uniquely positioned to deliver the insights that can bridge the gap between skills and people-centred innovation.

Skills offer a pathway to create opportunities for a more joined-up and collaborative tertiary education sector to achieve greater alignment in meeting Scotland’s economic and societal needs. The opportunity for skills-driven innovation via FE/HE collaboration to transform priority economic sectors is unprecedented. QMU will support, encourage, and catalyse partnerships between FE/HE, businesses, and the public sector to achieve inclusive economic growth.

## Section E: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

### Embedding and Promoting EDI

Well-cited sector evidence confirms that inequalities and under-representation in the Scottish KE&I ecosystem continue to present barriers to individual and collective KE&I endeavours. We welcome the evolution of KEIF away from the generic lens approach to EDI, continue to assert specific mandated measures in line with traditional economic metrics, and challenge the underlying assumption that this is just embedded in broader KEIF ambition. We acknowledge the importance of an intersectional approach, recognising that intersecting inequalities often shape people’s experiences in the KE&I ecosystem.

KEIF metrics should give due regard to the Scottish Government’s national measures linked to the wellbeing economy, economic democracy, and social and environmental justice.

QMU has been progressive and intersectional in its approach, using KEIF to lead and drive systemic and structural change in EDI via:

- Placing CWB and our anchor institution role at the centre of our mission-led focus and promoting and growing IDBMs.
- Proposing additional QMU KPIs that augment our commitment to understanding and addressing EDI barriers.
- Appointment of a new Entrepreneur in Residence to specifically champion Race, Gender, and Intersectionality in KE culture.
- Entrepreneurship as an enabler of Social Mobility.
- Skills and FE/HE collaboration in targeting sectors with significant structural inequalities, such as Health, Care and Wellbeing.
- Alignment of the widening access agenda and the KE&I, learning and teaching, and employability nexus.
- Investing our unique areas of academic strength in applied, participatory and complex interventions, including identity, social inclusion/ exclusion, citizenship, and social participation.

## Section F: KE&I Culture

### Promoting Positive KE&I Culture

We will use the KE Concordat principles to:

- Increase the focus of KEIF towards people, culture, and environment through alignment with the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029.
- Fully embed EDI in KE culture to understand the root cause of issues and use learning and insight to inform actions.
- Champion the responsible use of metrics.
- Maximise alignment of KEIF with UK concordats and national agreements, including the Technicians Commitment, Researcher Development Concordat, Concordat for Public Engagement, Concordat for Open Data and Research Integrity Concordat.
- Recognise and value the contribution of all staff to KE&I, including technicians, technologists, and professional services.
- Re-balance the emphasis on outcomes with the necessary inputs required for positive KE cultures.
- Commit to additional institutional KPIs to promote a positive and healthy KE&I culture. This includes a new QMU RKE&I Culture Metric and Framework to be integrated into institutional KPIs to monitor changes in QMU culture across a set of value-led measures aligned with the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) data.
- Encourage, support, and celebrate diverse career pathways traversing industry, academia, policy, and practice.
- Improve data on the movement of staff and the career destination of researchers as one of the most impactful forms of KE&I.

### Knowledge Exchange Concordat Principles

QMU was one of the first Scottish Universities to sign up to the UK KE Concordat and one of only three to self-select to participate in the development year. We have worked with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the University of Strathclyde to champion the KE Concordat in Scotland and ensure parity and alignment of KE&I with evolving REF 2029 sector developments that drive positive and healthy UK research cultures.

The three submitting institutions produced and shared our collaborative reflection on learnings from the exercise and feedback themes from the KE Concordat Evaluation Panel with SFC and the sector. We continue to advocate for balanced KE&I culture metrics to inform the evolution of KEIF in line with the UK KE Concordat High-Level Implementation Plan. We will continue to assert the importance and value of excellence in KE&I cultures to prevent fragmentation across the UK and disconnection between RKE&I culture and research culture.

Using KEIF and via FE/HE partnership, we will use the KE Concordat principles in a pilot exercise to promote learning from different cultures across the tertiary sector to inform best practices and enhance richer contextual metrics.

## Section G: Any Other Information

Underpinning this strategy are parity, equity, and elevated placement of Health, Care and Wellbeing in the national innovation ecosystem alongside other national challenge areas such as energy transition, life sciences, advanced manufacturing, and data/digital technologies.

QMU recognises the critical role of traditional research commercialisation and will consolidate activity in Food and Drink and Technology Enabled Health Care. Efforts will be directed towards collaboration with regional partners, such as the Global Research Institute in Health and Care Technologies at Heriot-Watt University, and new strategic relationships with national infrastructure.

In partnership with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow School of Art, University of Highlands and Islands and Abertay University, QMU is responding to government initiatives to explore models to build capacity and capability for collaborative shared services. We ask for shared access to specialist, IP, legal and contractual acumen and underpinning infrastructure to accelerate the commercialisation of new ideas wherever they occur in the ecosystem. We propose that traditional research commercialisation is only one form of innovation and does not meet the needs of all priority economic sectors.

Many key activities – co-production, soft infrastructure, networks, policy change, CWB, skills development, and entrepreneurship – do not involve direct monetary transactions. Relying solely on traditional KE income and scale-up metrics as proxies for impact is therefore limited. Spatially-blind, easily quantifiable KPIs risk stifling innovation in non-STEM priority economic sectors. KEIF offers a vital funding mechanism, enabling long-term, mission- and place-based KE capacity and capability, better aligned with the diverse, systemic nature of impactful economic development.

## Appendix A: Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
BRT	Bright Red Triangle
CEDARS	Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey
CWB	Community Wealth Building
EDI	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
EU	European Union
FE/HE	Further Education/Higher Education
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
IDBM	Inclusive, Democratic Business Model
KE	Knowledge Exchange
KE&I	Knowledge Exchange & Innovation
KEIF	Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NPF	National Performance Framework
NSET	National Strategy for Economic Transformation
QMU	Queen Margaret University
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RKE	Research and Knowledge Exchange
RKE&I	Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation
SCFDI	Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

**Appendix B removed for publication on the SFC website**

**Appendix B removed for publication on the SFC website**

# Appendix C: Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Analysis:													
<b>Policy / Project / Function:</b>	QMU 5 Year Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (KEIF) Strategy												
<b>Date of Analysis:</b>	31 January 2025												
<b>Analysis Rating:</b>  (See Completion Notes)	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 40px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 40px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 40px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 25%; height: 40px; background-color: #00b050;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red</td> <td>Red Amber</td> <td>Amber</td> <td>Green</td> </tr> </table>					Red	Red Amber	Amber	Green				
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<b>Type of Analysis Performed:</b>  Please Tick ✓	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%;">Systematic Policy Analysis</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">✓ </td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Consultation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓ </td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meeting</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓ </td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓ </td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Systematic Policy Analysis	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consultation	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Systematic Policy Analysis	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Consultation	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Meeting	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Other	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>											
<b>Please list any other policies that are related to or referred to as part of this analysis</b>	<a href="#">Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Guidance on the requirements of KEIF (2024)</a>												

**Who does the policy, project or function affect?**

Please Tick ✓ 

Employees

✓ 

Students

✓ 

Applicants

Members of the Public X

✓ 

Other (List Below)

✓ 

All external stakeholders who engage with the University.

**Equality Impact Analysis:**

<p><b>What are the aims and intended effects of this policy, project or function?</b></p>	<p>The Scottish Government’s vision in its National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), is to deliver a wellbeing economy for Scotland.</p> <p>A wellbeing economy, “is a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers prosperity for all Scotland’s people and places”.</p> <p>The KEIF is the SFC’s primary mechanism for supporting university KE&amp;I. It is designed to drive forward university contributions to national policy priorities and better recognise institutions’ individual and collaborative strengths, incentivising universities to design and adopt innovative new approaches to KE&amp;I. The approach seeks to recognise the diversity of institutions and the value of the KE&amp;I they deliver and embed equality, diversity and inclusion in KE&amp;I activities.</p> <p>Institutions in receipt of KEIF are required to submit, and have approved, a 5-year KEIF strategy. This should outline institutional priorities for KE&amp;I activity supported by KEIF and demonstrate alignment with the aims and ambitions of Scottish Government national priorities, such as Scotland’s National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and the National Innovation Strategy (NIS).</p> <p>A requirement of KEIF is the promotion and advancement of EDI across all 5-year priorities.</p>
<p><b>Is any Equality Data available relating to the use or implementation of this policy, project or function?</b></p> <p>(See Completion notes)</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Equality Data extracted from external sources has been used to inform this strategy (refer to sources in end notes).</p>
<p><b>List any Consultation e.g. with employees, students, Unions or members of the public that has taken place in the development or implementation of this policy, project or function</b></p>	<p>The requirements of KEIF were reported and considered by:</p> <p>QMU’s Research Strategy Committee on 23 November 2023, 22 February 2024, 3 June 2024, 9 October 2024 and 3 December 2024.</p> <p>Further discussion took place at meetings of QMU Research and KE Centre Directors and at our Enterprise and Innovation Network over the period November 2023 – December 2024.</p>

<p><b>Financial Analysis</b></p> <p>If applicable, state any relevant cost implications (e.g. expenses, returns or savings) as a direct result of the implementation of this policy, project or function</p>	<p><b>Costs (£m)</b></p> <p>Implementation      £ <input type="text"/></p> <p>Projected Returns    £ <input type="text"/></p> <p>Projected Savings    £ <input type="text"/></p>
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Equality Impact Assessment Test:				
What impact will the implementation of this policy, project or function have on employees, service users or other people who share characteristics protected by <i>The Equality Act 2010</i> ?				
Protected Characteristic:	Neutral Impact:	Positive Impact:	Negative Impact:	Evidence of impact and, if applicable, justification where a <i>Genuine Determining Reason</i> exists
Sex (Men and Women)		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to the Scottish Government's priority to address women's labour market inequality and to close pay gaps.</li> <li>• Elevate the critical role of innovation and entrepreneurship in sectors dominated by women - Health, Care and Wellbeing.</li> <li>• Currently, 1 in 5 of Scotland's entrepreneurs are women and ` start-ups founded by women receive only 2% of overall investment capital – our strategy will build on the work of the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Scottish Government (2024) Pathways - A new approach for women in entrepreneurship. <sup>i</sup></li> <li>○ UK Stewart Review and Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship<sup>ii</sup> to address intersectional knowledge gaps on gender and entrepreneurship in Scotland.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KEIF Strategy actions can be used to address barriers to career progression in innovation priority sectors/industries.</li> <li>• The application of applied participatory and complex interventions in addressing grand challenge areas such as social justice and economic democracy are fundamental to QMU's KE&amp;I vision and objectives.</li> <li>• Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> <li>• Investment in our flagship QMU Startup Studio and BRT Collaboration with Edinburgh Napier University and Edinburgh College to consolidate infrastructure and alignment with Women's Enterprise Scotland.</li> <li>• Appointment of Dr Nikita Dagga as QMU's new Entrepreneur in Residence.</li> <li>• Appointment of Dr Joan Ma as QMU's REF 2029 Women in Research Champion.</li> <li>• Placing much greater understanding and value of diversity in career pathways traversing industry, policy and practice – accounting for career breaks and periods of absence.</li> <li>• Investment in QMU Startup Studio to address CWB approaches to innovation confidence, gendered entrepreneurial spaces, male-dominated networks; and women starting enterprise creation with lower levels of capital. <sup>iiiiv</sup></li> <li>• Promote more equal gender balance in our prioritised economic sectors.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Race</b> (All Racial Groups)</p>		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scottish Government’s Total Entrepreneurial Activity Rate (TEA) measures the proportion of the adult working-age population actively trying to start a business, or that own and manage a business which is less than three and a half years old.<sup>v</sup> Overall patterns of TEA rates are higher in the ethnic minority Scottish population than the white Scottish population. Mainstream public sector business support is under-utilised by ethnic minority businesses.<sup>vi</sup></li> <li>• Minority Ethnic Group (MEG)-led businesses - only 4% of SME employers in Scotland are MEG-led.</li> <li>• MEG-led businesses face persistent challenges in accessing finance in all forms/volume.<sup>vii</sup></li> <li>• 13% of UK nationals of known ethnicity are of minority ethnic backgrounds.<sup>viii</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of applied participatory and complex interventions in addressing societal grand challenge areas such as social justice and economic democracy are fundamental to QMU’s KE&amp;I vision and objectives.</li> <li>• Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> <li>• KEIF Strategy actions can be used to address barriers to career progression in innovation priority sectors/industries.</li> <li>• Appointment of Dr Nikita Dagga as QMU’s new Entrepreneur in Residence.</li> <li>• Appointment of Dr Joan Ma as QMU’s REF 2029 Women in Research Champion.</li> <li>• Advocate for greater alignment of EDI metrics and the lack of integrated trend data. There is a major gap in UK-Scottish EDI data, particularly intersectionality for innovation-active businesses, as outlined in the UK Innovation Survey, and a lack of clarity regarding linkage with Scottish data such as the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Scotland.</li> <li>• QMU’s KEIF Strategy advocates for greater understanding and awareness of the limitations of trend data aligned to KEIF metrics, including intersectionality (gender/race/caring responsibilities and socio-economic).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability</b> (e.g. Physical, Sensory and Neuro Diversity.)</p>		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled people are less likely to be in employment and /or work in highly paid occupations.<sup>ix</sup></li> <li>• Disabled people are more likely to be living in poverty.</li> <li>• Disability creates barriers to accessing training and support.</li> <li>• Disabled innovators may not disclose their status owing to social stigmas, therefore becoming “invisible” and limiting options for promoting diversity.</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public perceptions (1 in 3) that disabled people are less productive may affect job opportunities and promotion/development that could be pathways to innovation. <sup>x</sup></li> <li>Address the Scottish Government Fairer Scotland for Disabled People employment action plan.<sup>xi</sup></li> <li>The National Innovation Strategy encourages high sector growth in priority economic sectors – ensure jobs and qualifications are accessible to everyone.<sup>xii</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on QMU's significant expertise in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving participation for all speakers, hearers and signers.</li> <li>Co-producing evidence-based change with neurodiverse and marginalised populations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>KEIF Strategy actions can be used to address barriers to career progression in innovation priority sectors/industries.</li> <li>The application of applied participatory and complex interventions in addressing grand challenge areas such as social justice and economic democracy are fundamental to QMU's KE&amp;I vision and objectives.</li> <li>Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> </ul>
<b>Religion or Belief</b>		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited data related to Religion or Belief and KE&amp;I.</li> <li>4.9% of women have experienced religious discrimination at work, college or university when trying to progress a career in STEM.<sup>xiii</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KEIF Strategy actions can be used to address barriers to career progression in innovation priority sectors/industries.</li> <li>As part of QMU's commitment to social justice, embracing EDI, and the respect and support of our community, we will align KE&amp;I activity with our Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Calendar. The calendar acts as the focus of communications, events and initiatives associated with its themes.</li> <li>Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> (Heterosexual, Homosexual and Bisexual)		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data in relation to LGBTQIA+ identities is typically not gathered, however literature provides evidence of discrimination in the sector.</li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KEIF Strategy actions can be used to address barriers to career progression in innovation priority sectors/industries.</li> <li>• The application of applied participatory and complex interventions in addressing grand challenge areas such as social justice and economic democracy are fundamental to QMU's KE&amp;I vision and objectives.</li> <li>• Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> </ul>
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**Equality Impact Assessment Test:**

**What impact will the implementation of this policy, project or function have on employees, service users or other people who share characteristics protected by *The Equality Act 2010*?**

<b>Protected Characteristic:</b>	<b>Neutral Impact:</b>	<b>Positive Impact:</b>	<b>Negative Impact:</b>	<b>Evidence of impact and, if applicable, justification where a <i>Genuine Determining Reason</i> exists</b>
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited data KE&amp;I data available however, challenges relating to integration back into the workplace after periods of absence are well cited.</li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI is at the centre of QMU's KE&amp;I culture and our alignment with REF 2029 research culture best practice.</li> <li>• The application of specialist QMU RKE&amp;I in applied participatory and complex interventions when addressing grand challenge areas such as social justice and economic democracy are fundamental to QMU's KE&amp;I vision and objectives.</li> <li>• Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> </ul>
<b>Marital Status</b> (Married and Civil Partnerships)		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher track record/previous activity is focused in many sectors on published outputs/grants etc. Historical and cultural practices focus on referencing past work with individual data (surname) – citations /H-index. This may be problematic for those who change names through marriage and also gender transition. We support wider sector recommendations to enable researchers who have changed their names to share their publication history without disclosing prior names or sensitive personal information.</li> </ul>

				<p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI is at the centre of QMU's KE&amp;I culture and our alignment with REF 2029 research culture best practice.</li> <li>• The application of specialist QMU RKE&amp;I in applied participatory and complex interventions when addressing grand challenge areas such as social justice and economic democracy are fundamental to QMU's KE&amp;I vision and objectives.</li> <li>• Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> </ul>
<b>Gender Re-assignment</b>		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researcher track record/previous activity is focused in many sectors on published outputs/grants etc. Historical and cultural practices focus on referencing past work with individual data (surname) – citations /H-index. This may be problematic for those who change names through marriage and also gender transition. We support wider sector recommendations to enable researchers who have changed their names to share their publication history without disclosing prior names or sensitive personal information.</li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI is at the centre of QMU's KE&amp;I culture and alignment with REF 2029 research culture best practice.</li> <li>• KEIF Strategy actions can be used to address barriers to career progression in innovation priority sectors/industries.</li> <li>• The application of specialist QMU RKE&amp;I in applied participatory and complex interventions when addressing grand challenge areas such as social justice and economic democracy are fundamental to QMU's KE&amp;I vision and objectives.</li> <li>• Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB).</li> </ul>
<b>Age (People of all ages)</b>		x		<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited national data suggests that younger age groups tend to engage more actively with KE&amp;I, particularly entrepreneurship. However, at QMU, we report a different pattern with broader engagement across higher age groups, reflecting the diverse career pathways of our academic staff, who frequently traverse academia and policy/practice. Much of the current innovation support – particularly research commercialisation, assumes a rather linear career path from undergraduate to post-doc and does not best support researchers who enter academia later in their careers, bringing extensive industry and practice/policy know-how. Many enter KE&amp;I having already identified a commercialisation opportunity based on lived-experience, and its impact, and the process of innovation is reversed. We urge funders and enterprise support to adapt to unlock</li> </ul>

				<p>this model of academic entrepreneur to better value extensive applied industry, policy and practice experience. Our staff report back that the language of RKE&amp;I is often biased towards younger age groups – boot camps, hunker downs, pizza nights, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital literacy and exclusion are a known barrier in older age groups particularly in the growing technology-based services sector. <sup>xiv</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parity of skills gained via practice experience with traditional linear models of commercialisation.</li> <li>• Digital literacy amongst different age groups of QMU staff working to support RKE&amp;I.</li> <li>• FE/HE collaboration to better understand innovation career pathways.</li> <li>• Balance our digital offer with in-person events and service offerings via the QMU Startup Studio.</li> <li>• Use the BRT Collaboration to stimulate entrepreneurial mindsets across all age groups.</li> <li>• Develop QMU's strategic relationship with the SFC's Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre to access national infrastructure for Digital Health – a Scottish innovation priority that will lead the way in improvements in digital health that will impact all of Scotland's citizens.</li> <li>• Priority intervention of Entrepreneurship for Social Mobility.</li> <li>• Community Wealth Building (CWB) endeavours to reach marginalised groups and improve further collaboration with Schools and Community Groups.</li> </ul>
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<b>Equality Impact Assessment Test:</b>				
<b>What impact will the implementation of this policy, project or function have on employees, service users or other people who share characteristics protected by <i>The Equality Act 2010</i>?</b>				
<b>Protected Characteristic:</b>	<b>Neutral Impact:</b>	<b>Positive Impact:</b>	<b>Negative Impact:</b>	<b>Evidence of impact and if applicable, justification where a <i>Genuine Determining Reason</i> exists</b>
<p><b>Gender Identity</b></p> <p>(People who identify as opposite to birth Gender, all genders or none) Note: Gender Identity is not currently covered under the Equalities Act 2010 however at QMU we encourage those undertaking equality impact assessments to include consideration of gender identity.</p>				<p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable researchers who have changed their name, including trans and non-binary researchers, women, and some researchers from overseas, to include all of their outputs within an application without disclosing their protected characteristics and exposing themselves to risk.</li> </ul> <p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI is at the centre of QMU's KE&amp;I culture and alignment with REF 2029 research culture best practice.</li> <li>• Proposing new person-centred economic development models via our commitment as an anchor institution to Community Wealth Building (CWB). The workforce pillar of CWB is focused on driving Fair Work practices and creating meaningful labour market opportunities in local communities that support well-being.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other: (Including QMU commitments to Contractual Status, Caring responsibilities and Trade Union Membership.</b></p>				<p><b>Caring Responsibilities</b></p> <p><b>Alignment with Government Policy and National-Scottish Government EDI data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology/digital transformation is changing how care is delivered in health and social care settings, offering the most transformative opportunity the two sectors have faced this century.</li> <li>• The majority of the most successful and well-established female entrepreneurs report being well supported by partners and/or their families in either/both the primary carer or home manager role. <sup>xv</sup></li> <li>• The majority of working age people receiving Carer's Allowance in Scotland was 69% women compared to 13% of men. <sup>xvi</sup></li> <li>• Unpaid carers are more likely to be over 45. <sup>xvii</sup></li> </ul>

				<p><b>QMU KEIF Strategy Action/Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reframing innovation and entrepreneurship in the Health, Care and Wellbeing sector or the Scottish economy – proposing “national grand challenge” status.</li> <li>• Through disruptive new FE/HE collaboration in entrepreneurship and Community Wealth Building (CWB), and by elevating skills as an innovation pathway, we plan to accelerate our KE&amp;I activity, aligning with City Deal and national innovation infrastructure, including our near completion <a href="#">Innovation Hub</a>, to access funding and support. Building on established collaborations and understanding the specific innovation needs of the sectors we serve, we aim to reframe entrepreneurial career pathways and harness new opportunities, enabling a paradigm shift in the KE&amp;I space QMU occupies in Scotland.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Does this policy promote / refer to Equality?</b></p>	<p>The potential of diverse talent is a cross-cutting theme across UK and Scottish Government Innovation, Economic Development and Entrepreneurship priorities. To enable the “Framework for Change” proposed in the Scottish Government (2023) Innovation Strategy and Entrepreneurial Campus Blueprint, we must understand the barriers to KE&amp;I in the specific economic sectors that QMU supports. QMU’s KEIF Strategy aims to begin to address some of the major structural inequalities that exist in the Scottish Government priority economic sectors of Health, Care and Wellbeing; Food and Drink; Social Justice and Social Innovation; and Culture and Creative Industries. In its strategy, QMU sets out a 5-year commitment via strategic ambitions and targeted KEIF-enabled investments to create an inclusive KE&amp;I ecosystem in Scotland. Through external collaboration across FE/HE and our anchor institution status in Community Wealth Building (CWB), we will leverage our strategic strengths in practice/policy-informed applied, participatory and complex interventions to drive transformation in our economy, distribute wealth, connect communities and be purposeful in supporting people, and place, and net zero.</p> <p>QMU has distinctive multidisciplinary expertise in RKE&amp;I across its six strategic RKE Centres in the following areas that underpin our 5 Year KEIF Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community empowerment and activism.</li> <li>• Sustainability.</li> <li>• Participatory methods towards change.</li> <li>• Critical pedagogies.</li> <li>• Science of enquiry.</li> <li>• Social policy.</li> <li>• Creative Arts in Health, Care and Wellbeing.</li> <li>• Complex interventions and equity-orientated evaluations.</li> <li>• Psychosocial wellbeing and mental health.</li> </ul> <p>One of the challenges is the lack of EDI trend data and alignment of UK/Scottish EDI metrics with further fragmentation across research, KE and innovation.</p>			

	A major barrier relating to participation in KE&I is intersectionality with commonalities being more striking than the differences. Our strategy aims to improve understanding of perceptions, attitudes, motivations and support needs via cross-sectoral government initiatives such as Community Wealth Building (CWB) to tackle structural discrimination and root causes of inequality and exclusion.
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**This Equality Impact Analysis was completed by:** Kim Stuart - QMU Research and KE Development Unit with input from:

- QMU Entrepreneur in Residence, EPSRC Impact Account Project Manager at HWU and Director of Laserquant Technology and Inventia Ltd.
- QMU Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Adviser
- Senior Lecturer in Physiotherapy
- Senior Research and KE Officer
- Head, Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation (SCFDI)

**Action Planning:**

**As a result of performing this analysis, what actions are proposed to remove or reduce any risks of adverse outcomes identified on employees, students or other people who share characteristics protected by *The Equality Act 2010*?**

<b>Identified Risk:</b>	<b>Recommended Actions:</b>	<b>Responsible Lead:</b>	<b>Completion Date:</b>	<b>Review Date:</b>
<b>Socio economic barriers to KE&amp;I relating to expectations of career destinations, employment and accesses to family financial resources.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment of KE&amp;I with widening access agenda/strategy.</li> <li>• Promotion of entrepreneurship for social mobility.</li> <li>• Learning from KE&amp;I cultures in FE.</li> </ul>	Research Strategy Committee and Student Experience Committee. RKEDU.	2030 – covering initial 5-year period 2025 – 2030	Annually – Autumn
<b>QMU KE culture aligned with Research Culture developments being driven by REF 2029.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing commitment to the UK KE Concordat.</li> <li>• New strategic QMU RKE&amp;I Culture metric and Framework to be integrated into institutional KPIs to monitor changes in QMU culture across a set of value-led measures aligned with the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) data.</li> <li>• Alignment and integration of Research Culture developments with KE Culture.</li> </ul>	QMU Research Culture Group and REF 2029 Strategy Group reporting to Research Strategy Committee.	2030 – covering the initial 5-year period 2025 – 2030	Annually – Autumn

<p><b>Ensure every person, area and community can participate in, and benefit from QMU KE&amp;I to ensure social and environmental justice and economic democracy.</b></p>	<p>QMU ongoing and elevated commitment to Community Wealth Building as an underpinning guiding principle in KEIF Strategy and investment – committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair Work practices.</li> <li>• Payment and promotion of at least the real Living Wage.</li> <li>• Providing appropriate channels for effective voice.</li> <li>• Action to promote and create more Inclusive and Democratic Business Models (IDBMs).</li> <li>• Prioritising KE&amp;I endeavours focused on skills development, in work progression and employee wellbeing, including for those at risk of potential exclusion from labour market in the future.</li> </ul>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p>	<p>2030 – covering the initial 5-year period 2025 – 2030</p>	<p>Annually – Autumn</p>
<p><b>QMU Priority economic sectors perceived to have a low historic propensity for R&amp;D.</b></p>	<p>QMU priority areas of KE&amp;I capacity and capability mapped onto national priorities – commitment to a proactive approach to understanding needs of specific priority economic sectors.</p> <p>Advocating for review of national KE&amp;I funding interventions and distribution to ensure access is widened and funding is distributed more equally based on the heterogeneous nature of priority economic sectors.</p> <p>Champion interventions to widen access to KE&amp;I from staff, student, service -users and community members from underrepresented backgrounds and marginalised groups.</p> <p>Celebrate the non-traditional career pathways of QMU researchers traversing practice and industry – understand their specific development needs and skill set.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p>	<p>2030 – covering initial 5-year period 2025 – 2030.</p>	<p>Annually – Autumn</p>
<p><b>Marginalised groups across staff, student and external stakeholder communities face</b></p>	<p>QMU KEIF commitment to addressing barriers to EDI in KE&amp;I Culture:</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team</p>	<p>2030 – covering initial 5-year period 2025 – 2030,</p>	<p>Annually – Autumn</p>

<p><b>systemic barriers to access, adoption and diffusion of KE&amp;I – deadlines, eligibility, inaccessible systems and documentation.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inaccessible deadlines, systems, processes and documentation.</li> <li>• Disparities in information sharing - opportunities and selection criteria due to closed conversations.</li> <li>• Access to “networking” which is typically based on existing relationships, involves travel, evening/weekend social events/conferences.</li> <li>• Vulnerability and burden on marginalised groups and bias in both decision-making and funding calls.</li> <li>• Structural inequality not evident in policy making.</li> <li>• Improved QMU staff career pathways.</li> <li>• Challenges of funding stability and availability.</li> <li>• Responsible use of metrics in KE&amp;I.</li> <li>• Apply and ensure that the REF 2029 principles of equity, equality, diversity and inclusion, and transparency are rooted in all KE&amp;I opportunities and policies.</li> <li>• Empower staff to recognise their own biases and understand the impact of structural inequalities in all KE&amp;I.</li> <li>• Build on QMU’s significant expertise in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improving participation for all speakers, hearers and signers.</li> <li>○ Co-producing evidence-based change with neurodiverse and marginalised populations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Continue to make our campus and outputs of KE&amp;I open and accessible to all stakeholders within and outwith QMU.</li> </ul>			
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## Completion Notes:

<b>Analysis Ratings:</b>	<p>After completing this document, rate the overall analysis as follows:</p> <p><b>Red:</b> As a result of performing this analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination exists (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) to one or more of the nine groups of people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i>. It is recommended that the use of the activity or policy be suspended until further work or analysis is performed.</p> <p><b>Red Amber:</b> As a result of performing this analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination exists (direct, indirect, unintentional or otherwise) to one or more of the nine groups of people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i>. However, a genuine determining reason may exist that could legitimise or justify the use of this activity or policy and further professional advice should be taken.</p> <p><b>Amber:</b> As a result of performing this analysis, it is evident that a risk of discrimination (as described above) exists and this risk may be removed or reduced by implementing the actions detailed within the <i>Action Planning</i> section of this document.</p> <p><b>Green:</b> As a result of performing this analysis, the policy or activity does not appear to have any adverse effects on people who share <i>Protected Characteristics</i> and no further actions are recommended at this stage.</p>
<b>Equality Data:</b>	<p>Equality data is internal or external information that may indicate how the activity or policy being analysed can affect different groups of people who share the nine <i>Protected Characteristics</i> – referred to hereafter as ‘<i>Equality Groups</i>’.</p> <p>Examples of <i>Equality Data</i> include: (this list is not definitive)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Application success rates by <i>Equality Groups</i></li> <li>2: Complaints by <i>Equality Groups</i></li> <li>3: Service usage and withdrawal of services by <i>Equality Groups</i></li> <li>4: Grievances or decisions upheld and dismissed by <i>Equality Groups</i></li> </ol>
<b>Legal Status:</b>	<p>This document is designed to assist organisations in “<i>Identifying and eliminating unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation</i>” as required by <i>The Equality Act Public Sector Duty 2011</i>. An Equality Impact Analysis is not, in itself, legally binding and should not be used as a substitute for legal or other professional advice.</p>
<b>Genuine Determining Reason</b>	<p>Certain discrimination may be capable of being justified on the grounds that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <i>A genuine determining reason exists</i></li> <li>ii. <i>The action is proportionate to the legitimate aims of the organisation</i></li> </ol> <p>Where this is identified, it is recommended that professional and legal advice is sought prior to completing an Equality Impact Analysis.</p>

