



University
of Dundee

Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund Strategy

AY 2025-26 to AY 2029-30

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Section A: Overview

1. Institutional context

Dundee is a research-intensive university, with a long-standing track record of success in translating internationally leading research into global impact – particularly in human health. Our overall vision is to be globally renowned for our social purpose, delivered through intensity and excellence in research, education and engagement. An important part of this vision is to have a positive impact locally and regionally in terms of prosperity, jobs and wellbeing – in recognition of the challenges and opportunities that a small city with significant deprivations like Dundee faces.

In 2023, Dundee was independently recognised as the best UK university for supporting spinout businesses (Octopus Ventures 2023), while we have a global reputation for life sciences, health and biomedical research (including top UK university for Biological Sciences in REFs 2021 & 2014). We have collaborated successfully for decades with the pharmaceutical industry, global venture capital and the NHS to translate this research. Regionally, we are partnering with Dundee City Council, the James Hutton Institute and Scottish Enterprise to create a Life Sciences Innovation District centered on Dundee that will benefit Scotland as a whole and contribute to the Health & Life Sciences Cluster (National Innovation Strategy).

In 2023 Dundee created a new Vice-Principal post for “Enterprise and Economic Transformation”, reflecting the centrality of this in our Strategy. The new post is intended to help mobilise the talents of our innovative and entrepreneurial staff, students and alumni across all Schools towards accelerating our positive impact on our city and region.

2. Overview of strategic ambitions

Dundee’s Strategy 2022-2027 is supported by Enabling Strategies including “Research with Impact” and “Engagement and Enterprise”. KE&I activities are critical for both Enabling Strategies and KEIF funding enables KE&I-specific roles to be supported via salaries, stakeholder collaboration and professional development. KEIF is therefore essential in enabling delivery of our main KE&I ambitions for the next 5 years, summarised as follows:

- Deliver major KE&I projects enabling the University’s overall strategy. We will complete our Tay Cities Regional Deal (“TCD”) “Growing the Biomedical Cluster” project (including opening our Life Sciences Innovation Hub), and – longer term – will help create Eden Project Dundee, to increase translation of our research and education into economic and social benefits in our City/ Region

- Select and deliver headline engagement projects to demonstrate our societal impact/social purpose. To grow our credibility and partnerships with regional stakeholders and evidence that our commitment to “social purpose” is real within Dundee.
- Create a new framework to drive income and impact Knowledge Exchange (KE) activities. We are creating Associate Deans for Enterprise and Economic Transformation in every School who will be central to a new University Committee responsible for embedding, delivering and monitoring the performance of KEIF KPIs. These will focus on improving performance in Consultancy and, especially, CPD where Dundee lags its benchmarks.
- Review our overall strategy for Enterprise & Entrepreneurship. Building on our well-earned reputation e.g. THE “UK Outstanding Entrepreneurial University 2024” and high-quality (but small) support functions, possibly developing this in collaboration with other regional HEIs
- with SFC, Scottish Government support.

3. Alignment to Scottish Government priorities

KE activity across our 8 Schools addresses all 4 of the Scottish Government’s key priorities, with the strongest emphases on “growing the economy” and “tackling the climate emergency”. Our work is informed by, and strongly aligned with, NSET (including Entrepreneurial Campus) and with Scotland’s National Innovation Strategy (“IS”).

Our regional activities, including via the Tay Cities Deal, involve partnering with outside organisations to drive economic growth and productivity. The Life Sciences Innovation District (with Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise) directly contributes to growing a Health & Life Sciences Cluster in Scotland (IS), and creation of high growth innovation-led entrepreneurial businesses (NSET). Our status as a founding partner in Eden Project Dundee, and our investment in the multi-disciplinary Binks Sustainability Institute, also position us firmly within the Energy Transition cluster (IS).

We aim to build on our excellent reputation for entrepreneurship and spin-out companies by making enterprise and entrepreneurship ubiquitous in our research and education, including longer-term within the undergraduate curriculum. This will continue to drive dynamic high growth companies in our City/Region and help deliver the NSET goal of a culture that encourages, promotes and celebrates entrepreneurship. This includes working with V&A Dundee and other creative industries partners to help stimulate growth in what is a very important sector for Dundee and Scotland.

Finally, our renewed vision for growing CPD in key subjects will help deliver on NSET’s ambition of ensuring people and employers gain the skills to grow business productivity in an ever-changing economy and society.

Section B: KE&I Capacity

4. Platform Grant

The University of Dundee will match fund the £250k per annum Platform Grant in cash terms, providing recurrent budget to support key staff and operating costs in the area of KE&I. As described in Section 5 below, the Platform Grant, combined with the rest of our KEIF, and our own core investment, supports around 20 members of staff directly, as well as over 12 staff where KE&I is a significant part of their role.

Specifically, the Platform Grant and our own funding enables and supports the new Vice-Principal post mentioned above, the Research and Innovation Services (“RIS”) Director as well as a new consolidated RIS Senior Management Team. Further support is provided from key KE&I, research, impact, regional engagement and student enterprise functions within professional services teams but also KE&I staff, such as Business Development Managers (BDMs), co-located in centers such as the Drug Discovery Unit (DDU) and Centre for Targeted Protein Degradation (CETPD).

This allocation reflects the reality – that successful delivery of our Strategy, as outlined in Sections 2 and 3 above, and Sections 7 to 11 below, relies upon the drive and activities of not only key Professional Services teams but also KE&I staff embedded within Schools and centers. We also use a relatively small proportion of KEIF to develop early-stage KE projects such as our RIS-delivered “Collaborate for Impact” Fund.

The introduction of KEIF may also allow Dundee to strategically review how KEIF is allocated in the future.

5. Overall capacity for KE&I

An estimated 20 staff are directly supported by KEIF with a further 12 staff having KE&I as a significant part of their role.

Section C: Outcome Grant activities

6. KE metric activity

In providing institutional forecast data, we have been careful not to create too much of a disconnect between the overall ambitions we expect KEIF to allow us to deliver, and the institutional budgeting that Dundee is currently engaged in as part of its Financial Recovery Plan.

Outreach at Dundee is aimed at a positive impact on regional organisations, including businesses. KEIF supports staff in RIS who run our regional events programme and promote SFC Innovation Vouchers and KTPs. The returns are often non-financial, and since Brexit this metric only reflects KTPs. Subject to our ability to sustain our investment in this area, we project a steady increase over 5 years consistent with recurrent efforts to grow KTPs with regional companies, working with Interface and the North of Scotland KTP Centre.

Enterprise schemes: Our success in identifying spin-out opportunities is reflected in annually returning SE High Growth Spin-out Programme income, but HGSP is constrained overall. We anticipate continuing to win HGSP at the same rate over 5 years, as we develop our pipeline of spin-outs in line with NSET and SNIS goals. Projected growth reflects continued funding for interactions with high-growth companies that are already trading, in line with SNIS.

Consultancy and CPD: Since COVID, Consultancy income has increased steadily but, while CPD income has rebounded, it is below our benchmarks. We are revising our policy for Consultancy and via School Associate Deans, raising awareness and driving growth in these KE categories. The projected increase in CPD reflects both the importance of CPD as a tool for economic and other impacts regionally, and the potential for CPD to assist with financial sustainability/income diversification.

Research: Our return is steady at c.£22M. Growth in Research income is an explicit strategic priority that led to investment in our RIS team in 23/24, to provide better support to all our Schools in driving Research growth. With our initial focus being on improved UKRI Research Council success, the impact on the categories of Research relevant to KE Metrics is expected to lag and therefore the forecast shows more significant growth after year 2.

Licensing income reflects the success in international markets of our licensees. It is an important indicator of the success of the companies we form and support, which typically address SNIS aspirations for a Health & Life Sciences Cluster but is also unpredictable as to amount and timing. Receipts of £41M from spin-out shares in 2020/21 dominate our underlying license royalty income, which shows a slight downward trend. We have therefore been cautious in our projections for Licensing.

Translational Awards are affected by the availability of the schemes “bundled” in the Metric, and by the levels of research results suitable for translation. We have projected an increase after year 3. This assumes that the schemes remain available and that recent research awards (>£90M) into our Life Sciences and Medical Schools yield increasing volumes of “translate-able” research from Year 4.

Venturing reflects initial investment in companies and is by nature “lumpy”. We aspire to grow the number and quality of companies we form, addressing NSET and SNIS goals, and will explore ways to achieve better outcomes. Risk investment in companies depends on prevailing market conditions, out with the University’s control. Therefore, our projection is based on historic average performance.

7. Graduate start-ups and spin-outs/Entrepreneurial Support

The 2023 appointment of a Vice-Principal for Enterprise & Economic Transformation signals the University’s strategic commitment to advancing entrepreneurship as part of its Engagement & Enterprise Strategy. Dundee already has a strong reputation in this area, having been independently rated #1 in the UK for Spin-out Success (Octopus Ventures Entrepreneurial Impact Ranking 2023), recently named European Innovative & Entrepreneurial University of the Year (Triple E, 2024) and Outstanding Entrepreneurial University of the Year in the 2024 THE awards. As part of the VP(E&ET)’s agenda, our strategy for Entrepreneurship in the University will be reviewed.

The University’s current financial circumstances mean that the proposed review may be delayed to 25/26 or even 26/27, which is regrettable but reflects our current reality. Our aspiration is that a new strategy will be comprehensive at institutional level and will aim to embed support for entrepreneurship and enterprise permanently in all the University’s activities.

The University is also actively exploring whether the success of the Tay Cities Partnership involving all HEIs, FEIs and Research Institutes in the Tay Cities geography may provide a basis for a shared service in entrepreneurial support. These discussions are at a very early stage but there appears to be appetite, and this approach would be consistent with SNIS, Entrepreneurial Campus and the recommendations of the UK Government Independent Review of University Spin-out Companies. The Dundee-led “[EdenTay](#)” entrepreneurial networking programme has been very successful and may provide a nucleation point for such an initiative.

In parallel with exploring the new approach, the units currently championing entrepreneurship (primarily our Centre for Entrepreneurship and our Research and Innovation Services) will continue

to co-ordinate and improve their offerings, with staff supported by the University's KEIF, including via:

- Delivering our highly successful "[Venture](#)" business competition annually, improving the prize package and increasing the reputational impact from the successes of its winners.
- Delivering our annual [Entrepreneurship Week](#) involving globally recognised speakers, workshops and hackathons, as well as extending our in person [Entrepreneurial Masterclasses](#) and [on-line podcasts](#).
- Rolling out further rounds of our "[Spinout Academy](#)" product aimed at Post Doctoral Researchers and Early Career Researchers who are considering commercialising their research.
- Working with Schools to increase subject-specific credit bearing modules in entrepreneurship.

As noted, all of the above activities are well-aligned with NSET and the [Entrepreneurial Campus blueprint](#). Finally, while we see survival rates as a positive indicator about the viability of individual start-up and spin-out businesses, we see a greater opportunity in concentrating on seeding businesses with growth and scale-ability potential as we believe these will have a greater positive impact on Economic Transformation in our City/ Region.

Section D: Wide KE&I activities

8. Wider Societal Impact

Dundee has [an express commitment to the delivery of "Social Purpose"](#) via triple-intensity in Learning and Teaching, Research with Impact and Engagement and Enterprise – and a long history of success. For example, knowledge exchange and innovation based on our research has directly impacted human health, locally and globally:

- Via collaboration with National Health Service Tayside we have transformed lives by making Dundee the first city in the world to eliminate hepatitis C.
- Via innovation in devices and practices, and associated international training programmes, Dundee transformed global practice in keyhole surgery – saving thousands of lives.
- Dundee pioneered the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme, the first national programme globally, which has transformed early detection and treatment of colorectal cancer in Scotland.

More recent successes are reflected in winning an award at the 2024 PraxisAURIL UK Knowledge Exchange Awards - the "[Art at the Start](#)" KE partnership with Dundee Contemporary Arts won for its measurable positive impact on the wellbeing of pre-school children from disadvantaged backgrounds in our region. Our Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science was also shortlisted for its sustained positive impact on the Police and Justice systems in the UK and Denmark. A recent internal review of our staff's contributions to public policy highlighted Scottish, UK and international policy impacts in Law and Justice, Social Policy, Education, Health and the Environment. Sustained commitment to outreach and social impact was also reflected in our achievement of a NCCPE Gold Watermark for Public Engagement in 2020.

As noted earlier, via our E&ET Committee we will identify and accelerate a small number of flagship initiatives which in turn will demonstrate our Social Purpose (especially within our region) over the period of this KEIF strategy. Longer-term when the University achieves a more sustainable footing,

we aspire to use the E&T Committee to make a case for (internal) KEIF investment in interventions to strengthen our central support for activities delivering societal and economic benefits. These interventions could include:

- Building on our leading practices in company creation to support creation of non-profit and social enterprises, with social missions. These could move our impact from ‘one-off’ interventions into sustainable and collaborative service offerings, available on a regular basis and which target specific communities (e.g. vulnerable or under-served groups).
- Creating dedicated evaluation support for non-financial evidence of impact through engagement or policy-influencing work. Not all benefits can be easily counted, and monitoring input metrics such as attendee numbers at events etc. are not a reliable proxy for actual benefit. This could in due course be explored in collaboration with regional partners, subject to availability of external funding support.
- Providing a framework for staff involved in policy-influencing work to showcase their work more effectively, and to ensure that the University’s public affairs are engaged with our policy researchers and vice versa.
- Providing/ extending a framework to develop relevant CPD offerings for senior leaders in the Public and Third Sector(s) in order to strengthen long-term links with the people and organisations who deliver Societal benefit via public services.

9. Collaboration

Examples of our approach to working collaboratively across the sector have already been provided in our responses to Section A. We see cross-sector collaboration as an important mechanism for us to enhance the quality, quantity and impact of our research and innovation at regional, national and international level. At institutional level, our continued active involvement in the Research and Commercialisation Directors’ Group (RCDG) of Universities Scotland (US), and its Enterprise Sub-Group will be the main conduit for collaboration across the Scottish HEIs to deliver collaborative KEIF outcomes. A recent example of this was engagement via RCDG in the RSE conversation about spinout creation in Scotland. Functional leaders from our Research & Innovation Services also have regular planning/co-ordination meetings through US’s sector-wide KE&I Development Manager.

We will continue to support to the success of Converge – our Head of Entrepreneurship is a long-standing judge for the programme and Dundee is one of the most committed and active HEI members of Converge. Our current financial circumstances may mean that this support is “in-kind” for the time being.

In relation to the stimulation of demand from Scottish companies (especially SMEs) and other organisations, Dundee works with the Enterprise Agencies, Scottish Government (SG), business networks, Interface, the Scottish Innovation Centers and others to stimulate demand from business and the public sector. Dundee’s KEIF-backed Regional Engagement team in RIS manages this and runs a Regional Programme of Events to identify new KE collaborations of mutual benefit. In recent years we have doubled Interface Innovation Vouchers awarded to 13 and grown Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (3 new KTPs in 2023) with a strong pipeline. Our main foci are regional (Tay Cities) and national (Scotland). Subject to our ability to maintain service, we aspire to concentrate on extending the growth in KTPs seen to date.

The nature of our Schools means that our points of engagement with the Scottish Innovation Centres is concentrated on two – Built Environment: Smarter Transformation (BE:ST) and Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre (DHIC). We will continue to work collaboratively with BE:ST on

collaborative innovation projects with BE:ST client companies on offshore renewables infrastructure and low carbon buildings as part of the Climate Action and Net Zero theme. We will engage more comprehensively with DHIC as we develop further our emerging developments in medtech and healthtech research and innovation.

10. Regional approaches

Our Strategy references explicitly the importance of our regional role and builds on outstanding previous impacts e.g. our partnership with Dundee City Council helped attract the V&A Dundee (Scotland's Design Museum) and supported the city's unique (in UK Terms) achievement of UNESCO City of Design status.

We are a leading actor in the Tay Cities Regional Deal Partnership ("TCD") which involves 4 local authorities, as well as all the regional HE, FE and Research Institutions. With Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise, we are creating a Life Sciences Innovation District centred on Dundee, this builds on existing TCD capital investments in the University, as well as a [TCD-backed "life sciences skills" programme](#) we co-created with Dundee & Angus College and the James Hutton Institute. With Dundee City Council, and the Northwood Trust we are also founding partners in [Eden Project Dundee](#), an initiative which will create a world-leading centre of education, ecology and inclusive community practices driving regeneration in Dundee's harbour area (starting in 2030). All of the above work is supported by the Regional Team of our Research & Innovation Services which is backed by KEIF.

As noted earlier, our EdenTay entrepreneurial networking initiative is a successful shared endeavour with St Andrews and Abertay and reflects our collaborative ethos. In 2021, we explored a regional shared IPR Management or TTO function with the same partners, and although this did not prove Feasible at the time we are now actively engaging with regional HEIs and Research Institutes to revisit this.

Section E: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

11. Embedding and promoting EDI

The University of Dundee is fully committed to EDI, as set out through our social purpose and values. To progress this, the University has launched an [EDI Strategy](#) which has four themes relating to an inclusive campus, workforce diversity, vibrant research culture and excellence in education and student experience. Within the KEIF strategy we intend to consider the following EDI aspects:

- Supporting equal access to graduate start up and entrepreneurial activities; evidence shows women are less likely to be involved in these activities, this reduces the pool of opportunity and potentially missing some creative ideas and developments.
- We will ensure active promotion and role modelling of women in this area to support diversification of this pool.
- When considering the wider societal impact of our activities, the University will include a equality analysis of targeted communities supported through the charities/non-profit organisations who benefit; conduct the policy impact approach relating to a broad spectrum of policies and has an analysis with has embedded equality lens; and embed EDI examples and inclusive approaches to CPD offerings.
- In our collaborations, the University will strive to ensure a diverse range of contributors and collaborators to enhance the views, vision and voices from across this field.

We expect the Enterprise & Economic Transformation Committee along with support from the ADEETs will provide a vehicle to drive these aspects alongside the creation of a supportive network to develop a positive KE culture within Dundee.

12. EIA

See Annex C.

13. Promoting positive KE&I culture

The University continues to be committed to embedding a positive and engaging culture for KE&I activities over the next 5 years. This will be led by the Vice Principal (Enterprise and Economic Transformation) and the newly established Associate Deans aligned to each of our eight academic Schools. The recently formed Senate Committee for Enterprise and Engagement will drive the strategy for Knowledge Exchange and Innovation and will be responsible for the monitoring and review of the KEIF strategy and KPIs. The eight academics schools are reviewing current workload models to ensure that KE&I activities are included in the planning and operational priorities. Internal systems and policies for CPD and consultancy are being redeveloped to support the academic community to proactively engage, delivering enhancement and growth in KE&I activities. The professional support team of Research and Innovation Services will operationalise the KEIF strategy and regularly review performance with Schools and the Engagement and Economic Transformation leadership team.

14. Knowledge Exchange Concordat principles

The University of Dundee confirms its commitment to the principles of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat.

Section G: Any other information



Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund: AY 2025-26 to AY 2029-30

Annex C: Equality Impact Assessment

Section 1: Key Information	
Name of policy, practice or project	Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF) Strategy AY 2025-30.
Provide a summary of what the policy, practice or project is trying to achieve	The Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund (KEIF) began in AY 2024-25 and is SFC's primary mechanism for supporting university KE&I activities. It is an evolution and replacement of SFC's previous core funding provided via the University Innovation Fund (UIF).
Reason for the EIA	New policy, practice or project <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change to existing policy or practice <input type="checkbox"/>
Lead person	
Directorate/School	University Executive and Strategy Office
Date EIA commenced	14/11/2024
EIA review date	01/11/2025
Authorising sign-off	
Date of sign-off	21/11/2024

Section 2: Assessment of Impact	
Age	<p>The UK's average age of research and development workers is 40.8 and the average age of successful entrepreneurs is 45 (https://www.enterpriseresearch.ac.uk/publications/the-uks-business-rd-workforce-skills-sector-trends-and-future-challenges/)</p> <p>The majority of Dundee's academic staff also fall into this age range (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/table-2).</p>
Disability	<p>Evidence shows that disabled people face structural barriers which can limit participation in both the workforce and innovation system (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-diversity-and-inclusion-in-innovation-study).</p> <p>4.86% of Dundee's academic staff identified as being disabled which is slightly lower than the sector average of 6.3% (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/table-2#main-content).</p>
Gender identity	No data found at University level.

Marriage and civil partnership	No data found at University level.
Pregnancy and maternity	No data found at University level.
Race	Dundee has a predominately white workforce (88%) with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) employees making up 9% of the workforce (https://www.dundee.ac.uk/corporate-information/employee-information-report-2021). BME individuals make up 7.2% of Scotland's population (https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/tableView/tableView.xhtml)/
Religion and belief	The majority of Dundee staff have declared that they do not hold any specific religious belief or have not declared any religious belief (https://www.dundee.ac.uk/corporate-information/mainstreaming-report-2023). This is comparable to that of Scotland (57%) (https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/tableView/tableView.xhtml).
Sex	58% of Dundee staff identify as female and 42% as male (https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/table-2#main-content). 47% of the UK workforce and 27% of the wider research and innovation workforce identify as female (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-and-innovation-ri-workforce-survey-report-2022). The proportion of women funded by Innovate UK is similar to proportion of women in the wider research and innovation workforce (https://www.ukri.org/publications/innovate-uk-applicant-diversity-data/innovate-uk-applicant-diversity-data-2022-to-2023/).
Sexual orientation	As of July 2022, the Dundee staff profile relating to sexual orientation comprised:63% identifying as heterosexual;24.6% as unknown, 7.6% prefer not to say. 5% of staff identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or other non-heterosexual orientation (LGBT+) This is comparable to 4% of people aged 16 and over identifying as LGBT+ in Scotland but indicates a lower proportion of heterosexual identifying individuals (87.8% in Scotland) (https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/2022-results/scotland-s-census-2022-sexual-orientation-and-trans-status-or-history/).
If potential discrimination is identified, please outline how you propose to eliminate or minimise this impact:	
<p>Within the KEIF strategy we intend to consider the following EDI aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting equal access to graduate start up and entrepreneurial activities; evidence shows women are less likely to be involved in these activities, this reduces the pool of opportunity and potentially missing some creative ideas and developments. • We will ensure active promotion and role modelling of women in this area to support diversification of this pool. • When considering the wider societal impact of our activities, the University will include an equality analysis of targeted communities supported through the charities/non-profit organisations who benefit; conduct the policy impact approach relating to a broad spectrum of policies and has an analysis with has embedded equality lens; and embed EDI examples and inclusive approaches to CPD offerings. 	

- In our collaborations, the University will strive to ensure a diverse range of contributors and collaborators to enhance the views, vision and voices from across this field.

Section 3: Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

Outcome 1: No Change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy, practice or project	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.
Outcome 3: Continue the policy, practice or policy but acknowledge potential risks	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.
Outcome 4: Stop the policy, practice or project	<input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap here to enter text.

Section 4: Monitoring and Review

Describe how the policy, practice or project will be monitored to ensure that actual impacts are identified.	RIS will work with People Directorate to develop a protocol to capture the protected characteristics of those impacted by this policy, and share it with other parts of the University engaging with staff, students and alumni in KE&I activities. The collated information will be retained by RIS and People for the purposes of monitoring and reporting, which will be done annually, comparing one year with another for progress.
When is the policy or practice due for review?	01/11/2025