

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND INNOVATION FUND STRATEGY AY 2025-26 TO AY 2029-30



University of
St Andrews

FOUNDED
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Section A: Overview

1. Institutional context

The University of St Andrews, a world-class institution renowned for its research and teaching excellence, has a strong commitment to fostering an ambitious, dynamic Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (KE&I) environment for our academics and students. The institution has five strategic themes, including one focussed on Entrepreneurial St Andrews. This theme sits alongside and is mutually reinforcing of four other strategic themes including World-leading, Sustainable, Diverse and Digital, serving to demonstrate the importance the institution places on growing KE&I activity and support. Our activity in KE&I spans the whole of our institution and has three central foci: supporting people, developing facilities and delivering activity.

Supporting People: At St Andrews we recognise that our staff are our key asset. We recognise that to deliver significant KE&I activity, we must provide high quality training and support. Our KEIF funding allows us to invest in our people through, for example, the development of a range of entrepreneurial training programmes, support for policy engagement through direct links to governments, membership of organisations like the Scottish Policy and Research Exchange (SPRE), and developing and investing in our Innovation Fellowship that gives staff the time they need to spend on innovation activity at critical points in the KE&I journey.

Developing Facilities: We are proud to invest in facilities for KE&I. Whilst much of the funding for this is driven via external routes such as the Tay Cities region deal, our KEIF funding provides support to enable these major bids to take place. In recent years we have invested in a physical Entrepreneurship Centre, facilities for industry/research engagement in green technologies at our newly developed Eden Campus and in the continued support and development for public engagement events. For example, our Budongo Trail / Living Links facility (a partnership with Edinburgh Zoo) sees over 450,000 visitors per year.

Delivering Activity: To deliver innovation activity, we have continued to invest in the support and services that are required. We have restructured much of our operational delivery through St Andrews Innovation, our in-house innovation support company which houses business development, commercialisation, and technology transfer expertise (with posts directly supported via KEIF) as well as providing specific support to early stage and university owned businesses. This organisation sits alongside wider support within the University for helping staff to maximise their research impact, engage with appropriate stakeholders and communicate research and innovation outcomes to the wider world.

In summary, we aim to cultivate an inclusive KE&I ecosystem that supports students, staff, and the wider community, driving economic growth and societal transformation locally, nationally, and internationally.

2. Overview of strategic ambitions

Over the next five years, the University will continue to build, enable and support an inclusive KE&I ecosystem that encourages innovation and enterprise across all disciplines. In doing this, we will expand opportunities for students, staff, and alumni to engage in KE&I activity with a significant focus on entrepreneurship through curriculum and co-curricular initiatives.

We will strengthen links with industry and third-sector partners to amplify societal impact. Through strengthening our outreach with industry and other partners, regionally, nationally and internationally, we will expose more of our research capabilities to those who have not previously worked with the University of St Andrews. Our partnerships will enhance commercialisation and use of our research and intellectual property, by working with those in a position to apply our knowledge in wider society.

It is our ambition to position ourselves as a leader in sustainable and green innovations, contributing to Scotland's Net Zero goals through continued investment at our Eden Campus and activities like hydrogen generation, Power to X, offshore wind energy, and visualisation and simulation we will create practical experience and living labs to identify optimal paths to a sustainable future.

To deliver these ambitions we will develop and cultivate KE&I activity amongst all our staff, including our students at both UG and PG levels. This will require a continued commitment to skills development and support to build the role models that will encourage others.

Our KEIF funding will be used to support our priority investments, allowing them to grow and, in time provide the mutually reinforcing support that successful entrepreneurial activities can deliver. KEIF will also provide us with the significant underpinning support that will be required to deliver the smooth pathways that significant innovation activity requires.

3. Alignment to Scottish Government priorities

Our KE&I strategy directly supports the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, Scotland's National Innovation Strategy and the Green Industry Strategy. We support the Innovation Strategy through the development of its Key Priority Areas in (1) Higher Education Sector Capabilities and (2) The Application of Innovation to Business and we see clear opportunities for our KE&I activity to deliver significant advances in all four of the broad thematic areas of Energy Transition, Health and Life Sciences, Data and Digital Technologies and Advanced Manufacturing.

We highlight, in particular, our developments at Eden Campus where the industry-available facilities that we are committed to invest in will provide a unique space for companies to work in collaboration with researchers to deliver the advances that will be required to support the next generation of Scottish industrial technology and products, with a particular focus on net zero and health sciences. We will drive innovation and enterprise from within the Tay Cities Region to contribute towards the diversification of Scotland's economy. Through our participation in the Tay Cities Clean Growth workstream, we will promote a sustainable and inclusive recovery through green innovation initiatives.

We will work across Fife in partnership with Fife Council, Fife Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Enterprise, along with industrial partners to contribute to regional economic regeneration via the Eden Campus and entrepreneurial outreach programmes.

We intend this work will be extended into the rest of the Tay Cities Region. This will also engage with regional growth funding to cement further the University's role at the heart of economic growth. We are mindful in taking this activity forward of the need to continually advance equality, diversity, and inclusion in entrepreneurial opportunities.

Our continued development of support for entrepreneurial activities aligns with SG ambitions expressed as outlined through [Tuffee and Little's "The Entrepreneurial Campus"](#) report. We will deliver the skills that our staff and students need to build their own successful activities in Scotland and the wider world.

Section B. KE&I Capacity

4. Platform Grant

Our platform grant funding from KEIF provides us with the support that we need to invest in our underpinning support systems for KE&I and the University is pleased to confirm its commitment to match fund the KEIF Platform Grant through internal funding and fully recognises the leverage opportunities that this support provides.

The focus on scaling up its external programmes and on entrepreneurial activity will increase further the resources available. This grant combined with our internal sources will be utilised, amongst investment across the KE&I system, to expand the capacity of the Entrepreneurship Centre to deliver increased entrepreneurial training coupled with a resolute focus on capturing feedback and outcomes to improve and iterate the offerings. The number and scope of the courses offered will be expanded, as will the numbers engaged and across an increasingly diverse community of staff, students and external parties.

We will enhance the number of and level of support to our innovation fellowships and student innovation programmes. These targeted and strategic support mechanisms have and will demonstrate significant value in accelerating venture creation throughout the next five years. We will invest in advanced digital tools and platforms to streamline processes and improve engagement. We will review the range of activities as part of a broader Research and Innovation Strategy review and look to align these strategically and as part of this consider a step change in the supporting digital infrastructure for these teams to support delivery to stakeholders.

We will continue to invest in our institutional support for impact and innovation activity. This includes ring-fenced funding for such activity through our Impact and Innovation funding and targeting funding specifically into areas of our university who have traditionally had less opportunity to develop their approaches to KE&I fully to realise the potential across all our areas of research.

5. Overall capacity for KE&I

Our overall capacity for KE&I arises both from KEIF funding and through other investment, internally from the University and from other organisations. As we grow our KE&I activities, we would expect to grow funding from other sources to provide the enhanced support that will be required for our programmes.

In AY2025/26, we have 19 KE&I dedicated staff in a range of roles. We expect this to increase in line with funding including using financial returns from entrepreneurial activities.

These supporting roles play a vital role in embedding knowledge exchange, innovation and entrepreneurship throughout the institution. This growth in support will be linked with both a review of research support and the development of a new Research and Innovation Strategy. We believe it will also be against a backdrop of increasing research grant activity as signalled by growth in applications and awards in the most recent years.

For staff, expansion and upskilling is expected through a mixture of professional development and targeted recruitment. We have strong retention rates for our KE staff. This will support our people strategy in this arena. Our increases in support will be required to deliver against our ambitious targets in this space and will be a mix of specialists focused on KE delivery and those playing broader supporting roles.

Investment in KE&I facilities will also be supporting through securing external funding. In AY2026/27 we will deliver an innovation facility in Power2X, a key technology for the future green chemical industry and our plan to develop the spaces that are needed will allow advanced industry and businesses to flourish in Scotland. We will actively work to identify sources of funding that will allow us to demonstrate a significant return on investment for our KEIF funding.

Section C: Outcome Grant activities

6. KE metric activity

We are committed to an ambitious growth overall for our KE&I activity which will be reflected in the metrics reported back to SFC. Whilst we see potential for this growth across the board, we highlight opportunities in further licensing and translation income, we see significant opportunity to grow consultancy activity which we intend will lead to further research and innovation activity. We intend to grow our consultancy service as the first step to research activity for SMEs aiming to recruit 100 university staff consultants by 2029. We believe that this activity also offers a good first step to wider engagement with industry and other partners and aim to develop relationships built through consultancy into wider university / industry activity. Our focus on industrial partnerships is expected to increase the percentage of research income from industry to 12.5% of overall research funding by 2029. We also expect sustained growth in CPD income through the five-year forecast period.

We have a small but growing pipeline of graduate start-up companies. We have supported these through their initial phases and through outreach will still offer ongoing support with the

goal of having at least 20 companies surviving after 3 years of trading by 2029. This activity is reflected in the revenue growth within the venturing forecasts. Our growing pipeline of spin-out companies will explore opportunities to support these companies with funding additional to that offered via KEIF.

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

We will strengthen entrepreneurial support and contribute to Scotland's vision for innovation-led entrepreneurship. We introduced innovation fellowships in 2023 to give an opportunity for staff to take a year to focus on establishing viable trading entities or licencing opportunities. Our intention is to expand the number of fellowships from 2 to 4 by 2027 and then to 8 by 2029. This growth will be deliverable only through the proven success of enabling colleagues to navigate the early stages of this process through this fellowship. We will expand and adapt the Entrepreneurial Fasttrack training programmes available to both undergraduate communities along with targeted provision to the postdoctoral cohort recognising their importance in many of our spin-out activities.

By developing our networks with friends, alumni and industrial contacts we will place innovators with expert mentors during the journey and as their needs evolve. We will also link up the activities above with tailored ongoing support including access to mentor and investment networks with physical space and access to facilities at the Eden Campus and alignment with the Research Commercialisation Action Plan under Scotland's Innovation Strategy.

Section D: Wider KE&I activities

8. Wider Societal Impact

We are engaging more with both Fife Council and Fife Chambers of Commerce. Continuing with this engagement and outreach our presence will be more noticeable through mid, south and west Fife, areas where St Andrews does not have a history of visible engagement. This will also better connect us to the innovative hub around Rosyth and the industrial presence there.

We have been central to the development of the clean growth initiative for the Tay Cities Deal, working with partners in Perth and Kinross, Dundee and Angus. By connecting through other partners, we will increase accessibility to our ideas and expertise in communities which have been traditionally beyond our purview. We will develop and deliver outreach programmes targeting local schools and third-sector organizations, in line with Scotland's strategy to foster inclusivity and spread innovation benefits to diverse communities.

We also believe that expansion of our reach on entrepreneurship will complement our already extensive outreach across Fife primary and secondary schools to raise aspirations amongst the young and tackle widening access at source.

Our intention is to further expand Eden Campus offerings to include additional community-focused innovation labs, aligning with Scotland's Innovation Strategy emphasis on creating regional innovation clusters. This will include a maker space within the campus. This will be dependent on future regional growth deal funding from both the UK and Scottish Governments. We will continue to host, and grow the number of, community events

showcasing the impact of university-led entrepreneurial activities, looking to expand these beyond our natural domain of North East Fife.

9. Collaboration

We recognise that for the programme that we have outlined to be achieved we will have to collaborate with others so that our collective results are greater than the sum of its parts. We are strengthening our relationships regionally and engaging meaningfully on innovation and the generation of economic growth across this region and for Scotland. This work will continue to grow.

We are also closely aligned with Interface, Converge, regional innovation hubs and SFC Innovation Centres to share best practices and resources. We have expanded on the range of collaboration across other Scottish Universities so that we can share best practice. We recognise the value of activity that is taken forward at a national scale and will contribute to national initiatives, including the Entrepreneurial Campus Strategy and IP Commercialisation Peer Network.

We will continue to engage with major funders to ensure that leverage for KEIF funding can be obtained. In Scotland this may include regional development agencies or the wider Scottish government whilst further afield we will be seeking to grow our funding from UKRI through appropriate awards including impact acceleration accounts and via Innovate UK to support particular projects.

Working closely with the University we will continue to explore the potential for philanthropic support including through connections to inspiring alumni / friends who can provide support at both an institutional level and to individuals with particular ideas they wish to drive forwards.

We building strong relationships through partnership and activity at The Eden Campus with Fife College and Dundee and Angus College to ensure that innovation skills gaps are tackled at all levels. These relationships will help to create a seamless pipeline of entrepreneurial talent in the region with a particular focus on our significant place and role within Fife.

10. Regional approaches

Through strengthening our established ties with Fife Council, the Fife Chamber of Commerce, Tay Cities Partners (local authorities, universities, colleges and industry), and other local bodies to foster regional economic growth.

Via collaboration and outreach with local enterprises we will create scalable business solutions and foster job creation, with The Eden Campus offering a viable location to accommodate such growth in an area where such facilities are scarce.

Increasing our engagement, with partners, to integrated University expertise into the development of regional growth and innovation strategies, will ensure that ideas initiated and developed can be exploited in this region. We have formed the EdenTay Founder's Club with the Universities of Abertay and Dundee to bring together entrepreneurs in a supportive network and to offer expertise to those with aspirations to form similar ventures We recently initiated

the creation of a strategic network of Scottish Entrepreneur Centres to share best practice. We are strongly committed to driving this collaboration forward.

As part of the overall partnership between the University and NHS Fife, we have initiated a range of activities which have led to the identification for innovation to drive service improvement in several key areas. We are working jointly with NHS Fife to develop and implement solutions in these areas. This approach has been expanded to a cluster of industrial partners in Fife seeking to identify innovation that will have application across a number of sectors.

Section E: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

11. Embedding and promoting EDI

Our commitments to creating inclusive activity with KE&I are led from the Diverse St Andrews institutional strategic theme. We are proud to achieve the Race Equality Charter Bronze Award in September 2024 alongside our institutional Silver Athena Swan Award received in March 2024.

We will continue to create a welcoming KE&I environment which offers opportunities for all regardless of their background. We will monitor the effectiveness and reach of our programmes based on the make-up of those who take part and where we see the potential for issues arising, we will act proactively.

We will explore the issues of differential opportunity within KE&I and may provide specific support e.g. through the appropriate selection of role models, external speakers, targeted support etc to ensure that we have properly balanced programme which provides specific encouragement to under-represented groups. We will work with the wider institutional EDI team to ensure that we fully embed our institutional commitments to EDI and Social Responsibility within our KE&I programme and to ensure that appropriate equality assessments are made of our activity where appropriate.

12. EIA

The University confirms that an Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted and accompanies this strategy document.

Section F: KE&I Culture

13. Promoting positive KE&I culture

We recognise that KE&I activity falls within our wider commitments as an institution that seeks to continue to develop a positive culture within which our academic activities take place. Our KE&I work will be overseen both through the St Andrews Innovation Board which includes academic, professional services and non-Executive commercial representation and through the institution wide Research, Impact and Innovation Committee which has a Research Culture subcommittee whose remit includes our KE&I activity. We recognise that building a positive culture does not stand on its own but as an integral part of our activities including the EDI commitments made in section 11 above. We will celebrate entrepreneurial achievements

through awards and recognition programmes, including regular reviews of our promotion criteria to ensure that KE&I activity is fully included. We already integrate entrepreneurial education into core curricula, co-curricular activities, and professional training programmes. This activity will be combined with targeted outreach with aspiring entrepreneurs to ensure that the learning is embedded in activity.

We will work with our Research Technical Professional staff through our Technician Engagement group to make sure that their contributions to KE&I are recognised. We will also work with our PG(R) students and our research focussed staff groups to raise awareness of and understand any specific issues they may have in engaging in KE&I activity.

We will conduct regular surveys to measure and enhance the entrepreneurial culture across the University, adopting metrics inspired by Scotland's Innovation Scorecard approach.

14. Knowledge Exchange Concordat principles

The University reaffirms its commitment to the Knowledge Exchange Concordat principles, ensuring collaboration and shared success across the sector. We signed up to the principles of the Concordat in December 2020 and remain resolutely committed to these.

EIA assessment - University of St Andrews 5-Year KEIF Strategy

1. Purpose of the Policy/Strategy

To enhance the University's Knowledge Exchange and Innovation activities by fostering entrepreneurship, promoting sustainable innovation, and aligning with Scottish Government priorities such as inclusivity, economic transformation and green innovation.

2. Scope of the EIA

This EIA examines the high-level strategic goals of the KEIF Strategy and their implications for equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). It also considers the extent to which existing institutional policies around recruitment, HR, student admissions, and community engagement mitigate potential impacts.

3. Key Strategy Stakeholders

- University staff and students.
- Local communities and regional partners.
- Scottish Government and funding bodies.
- Industry collaborators and entrepreneurial networks.

4. Potential Impacts

- **Positive Impacts:**
 - Increased opportunities for diverse groups to engage in entrepreneurship.
 - Improved accessibility to knowledge exchange resources.
 - Strengthened partnerships and alignment with EDI-focused initiatives.
- **Negative Impacts:**
 - Risks of unintentional exclusion if outreach and recruitment are not sufficiently inclusive.
 - Potential challenges in scaling diversity metrics across all activities.

5. Mitigations and Recommendations

- Ensure alignment with existing EDI frameworks, including particularly: the
 - University's Athena Swan and Race Equality Charter action plans.
 - Student admission policies and governance
 - Recruitment policy
- Evaluate development of tailored programs to support underrepresented groups in accessing entrepreneurial opportunities. Commit to delivery of the recommendations.
- Conduct periodic reviews to evaluate the effectiveness of EDI measures and address gaps.
- Ensure alignment of project practices to all EDI policies including the student and staff disability policies
- Launch initiatives to increase diversity in entrepreneurial leadership roles.

- Develop targeted programs for underrepresented groups, ensuring inclusive access to entrepreneurial resources.
- Foster a culture of inclusivity through awareness campaigns and training.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- Consulted with EDI teams and stakeholders.
- Incorporated input from the University's EDI resources.
- Discussion with peers in the HEI sector across Scotland.

7. Monitoring and Review

- Regular reporting on EDI-related outcomes and integration into broader knowledge exchange metrics.
- Annual review to ensure continued alignment with government priorities and institutional goals.

8. Conclusion

- There is no expected detrimental impact with the implementation of the strategy.
- The strategy demonstrates a strong commitment to fostering equality, diversity, and inclusion. Effective implementation of the recommendations will ensure that the strategy not only aligns with institutional priorities but also advances inclusivity in line with societal and governmental expectations.
- The student population is expected to grow and to further diversify, a continued focus on meeting the diverse needs of the student population will be required together with ensuring that access training remains open.