



# FAQs relating to the Ministerial announcements on 26 September 2019, at the Research England Engagement Forum, London

## HEIF funding and method

### 1. Is the increase of HEIF to £250m from 2020-21 a new announcement?

The Government's commitment to the increase of HEIF to £250m was published in the Industrial Strategy, and confirmed in the UKRI Delivery Plan. We are now confirming details: that decisions on allocations will be made as part of Research England and OfS's funding rounds in Spring 2020, and published along with details of a long-term review of the HEIF method.

### 2. Who makes decisions on HEIF allocations?

Decisions are made by Research England in conjunction with the Office for Students, taking into account Government, UKRI and DfE priorities in annual grant announcements and guidance letters, and advised by the Research England Council.

### 3. Will the method for HEIF allocations in 2020-21 be different from 2019-20?

The Minister announced that there will be a long-term review of the HEIF method that will inform allocations in the later part of the next HEIF planning period, which runs from 2020-21 to 2024-25. It is likely then that there will be continuity in 2020-21 with the method set out for the last planning period, 2016-17 to 2020-21, in HEFCE circular [2016/16](#). The approach to allocations will though need to consider the use of the additional £25m being made available to support delivery of the Industrial Strategy from 2020-21 onwards.

### 4. Will new policies and priorities for HEIF be published alongside 2020-21 allocations?

Revised guidance updating HEFCE 2016/16 will be published in RE funding round documents for 2020-21 allocations, taking account of any new Government, UKRI or OfS priorities (for example in the Spending Review). Guidance in Spring 2020 is though unlikely to change significantly from HEFCE 2016/16. RE will publish new guidance for the new HEIF method later in the period, which may be significantly different from the current approach to date. Hence, we do not want to implement two significant changes of approach within one planning period.



## **5. Will a new round of HEIF strategies be requested?**

We set out in the RE delivery plan our approach of asking for long-term accountability statements as the basis of HEIF allocations. These are likely to be more narrowly focussed on uses of HEIF than previous strategies, so as not to duplicate unduly information submitted for the KEF and KE concordat exercises. Details will be set out in RE funding round documents in spring 2020. New guidance on the next method for HEIF is also likely to cover appropriate accountability requirements.

## **6. Why are you reviewing the HEIF method?**

Our decision to review the funding method reflects that we have made good progress to develop the KEF as a more accurate approach to measuring KE performance, which is the focus of the HEIF allocation method; and our progress has been praised by the Universities Minister as meeting Government priorities. It also reflects that the HEIF method has not been the subject of full consultation since its inception in 2006. There have also been various incremental changes to the method over time to address specific policy priorities, and the review gives us an opportunity to look at the best means to address all these. A new method will also allow us to consider how to address new policies, for example how to give greater attention to student contributions and benefits, which is the subject of our current joint call with OfS.

## **7. How will a new HEIF method be developed, and when?**

Further information on the approach to making changes to the HEIF method will be published as part of RE documentation in the spring 2020 funding round. The approach is likely to include: a review of the principles and strengths and weaknesses of the current method; consideration of any new Government, UKRI and OfS priorities and availability of funding; construction of a new method based on a further developed KEF; and full consultation. RE and OfS intend to use the new method to make HEIF allocations within the later part the next planning period which runs from academic year 2020-21 to 2024-25.

## **KEF**

### **8. The minister said KEF will be rolled out this year – what does that mean?**

Research England intend to publish final decisions on the first iteration of the KEF in January 2020 (publication delayed by pre election publishing restrictions). This will set out in detail the final metrics, approach to clustering, narrative templates and plan for implementation.



### **9. What is the implementation plan?**

We anticipate that the first KEF results will be published in late spring 2020, drawing on the latest 2018-19 official statistics gathered by Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) via the Higher Education - Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) dataset and other sources as advised in the final decisions.

### **10. What will be changing from the proposals that you consulted on?**

As set out in our publication '[Knowledge Exchange Framework: Outcomes of Consultation and Pilot Exercise](#)', we have undertaken a thorough analysis of information received during both the consultation and the pilot. Whilst we believe that the fundamental design of the KEF as proposed is sound, there are several areas of focus (e.g. on some individual metrics and structure of narrative templates) that are likely to change. These changes will be detailed in the final decisions report due to be published in January 2020.

### **11. Is the KEF compulsory?**

Research England intend to publish the KEF metrics of all institutions in receipt of our Knowledge Exchange funding in late spring 2020. We will also publish the narrative information from those institutions that chose to submit them. We will then evaluate the results with a view to making full participation a condition of our funding from Academic year 2020-21.

Whilst the narrative statements will not be compulsory in AY2019-20, we believe that the narratives add valuable contextual information and we would strongly recommend HEIs in receipt of our funding submit them.

### **12. Will we have to collect new metrics?**

No. For this iteration, all metrics are derived from currently collected data. As the narrative information will be compiled by individual institutions, if you chose to submit narratives, you may wish to include data or evidence that you do not currently hold, but this is your decision.



### **13. How will the KEF be linked to funding?**

There will be no immediate link to funding and HEIF will continue to be allocated via the current method. We will evaluate the first iteration of the KEF with a view to making participation a condition of our funding from academic year.

Further, we are committing to a longer-term evaluation of our funding methods as described above. We believe that KEF is likely to provide important tools to measure and reward KE performance and delivery of key Government priorities, and could therefore provide the basis for a new method of allocating funds in the future.

### **14. How does the HE-BCI review link to KEF?**

The major review of the HE-BCI survey announced by HESA is likely to provide new metrics related to knowledge exchange which could feed into future iterations of the KEF. We will continue to work closely with HESA on the review.

## **KE Concordat**

### **15. What is happening next on the KE Concordat?**

The Concordat is being developed under chairmanship of Professor Trevor McMillan, the Vice-Chancellor of Keele University, currently supported by Universities UK/GuildHE and Research England. The final version of the Concordat with a high level implementation plan will be published in Spring, with the expectation that universities will commit to it from 2020 onwards.

### **16. Will the Concordat be linked to funding – and how does it fit with KEF and HEIF?**

The Concordat complements the KEF by providing the means to improve continuously institutional KE performance measured in KEF outcomes; and complements HEIF by providing the means to improve efficiency and effectiveness in use of public funding for KE. We expect universities to commit to it, and we will set this out in our spring 2020 guidance. We will also take account of plans to implement the Concordat UK wide and the potential to work alongside other Funding Councils.