



Universities Scotland further submission of evidence to Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee inquiry on Scotland's Economic Performance

Can Universities Scotland provide information on how much is allocated from the Funding Council for knowledge exchange activities – over a number of years if possible but for 17/18 and 18/19 in particular?

Universities receive underpinning funding for knowledge exchange activities via the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

Over recent years SFC has developed the grant, moving from the Knowledge Transfer Grant (KTG) to the Universities Innovation Fund (UIF). The English equivalent of KTG/UIF is the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) will increase to £250M by 2020/21. This increase has been made to give English HEIs the additional funds to operate under, primarily, the UK Industrial Strategy. Over a similar time period (17/18 to 20/21) UK Government will increase a significant additional funds in research and development with an additional £425M in 17/18 to an additional £2Bn (per year) by 2020/21. This is the biggest increase in government R&D investment since records began in the 1970s. This represents a huge opportunity that additional investment in English HEIs is enabling them to access.

We have seen a modest increase in UIF in recent years and we welcome this. However, if consequential from the increases in HEIF has been passed on directly to the sector in Scotland then there would be a further £10M to spend on innovation in Scotland.

The tables and charts below indicate the comparable level of resource available to English and Scottish higher education institutions for innovation.

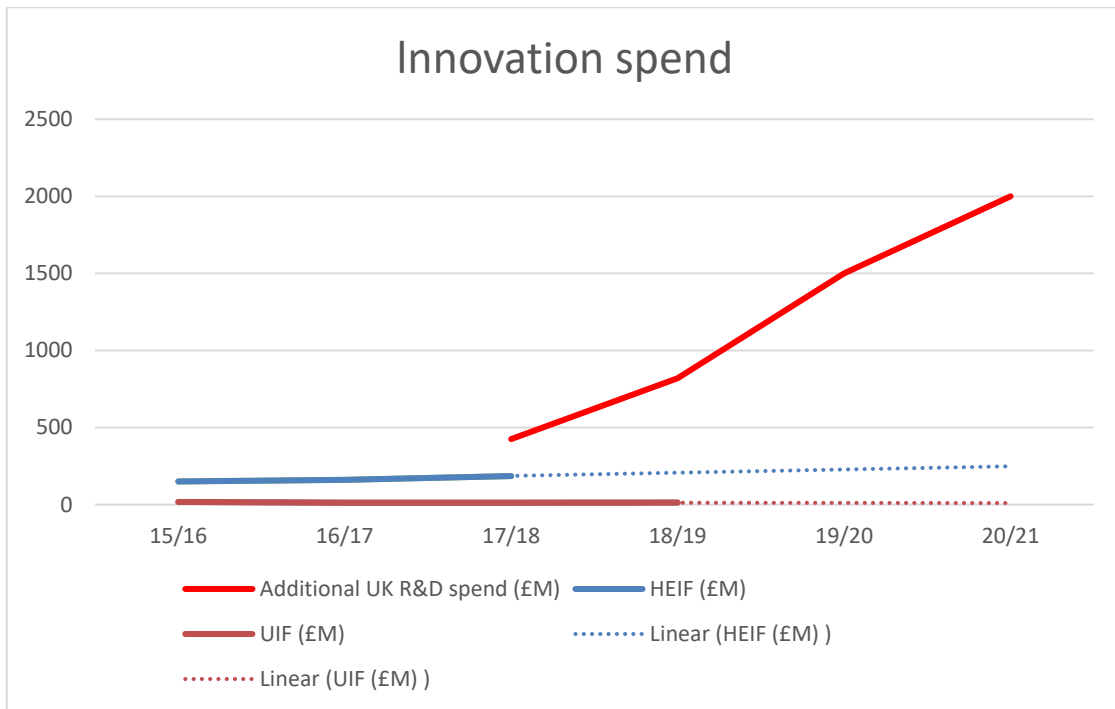
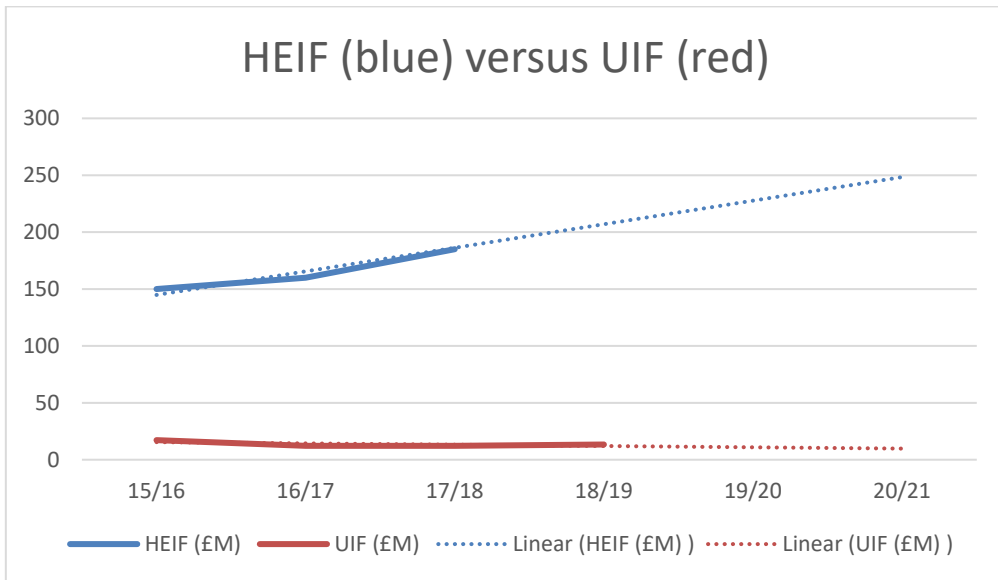
Table 1: UIF funding year-to-year (Scotland)

Year	UIF funding (£M)	% increase/decrease from previous year
2018/19	13.4	9.84
2017/18	12.2	0
2016/17	12.2	- 29.07
2015/16	17.2	n/a

Table 2: HEIF funding year-to-year (England)

Year	HEIF funding (£M)	% increase/decrease from previous year
2018/19	Not yet clear from Letter of Guidance of 31 March 2018	
2017/18	185	15.62
2016/17	160	6.66
2015/16	150	n/a





Regarding the Research Excellence Framework – can you provide details on how ‘impact’ is weighted in the overall assessment of rankings (and how outputs and environment are also weighted)?

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. REF is highly valued by our institutions as a recognised quality endorsement, for providing meaningful benchmarking and to drive/target quality improvements. It is also a driver of research funding, used to allocate resources to Scottish HEIs via the Research Excellence Grant (REG).

The REF assesses three elements – research outputs, impact and environment. Impact is “an effect on, change or benefit to economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.” Recent research shows that research of fundamental quality delivers this impact.



In REF 2014 the weightings were 65% outputs, 20% impact and 15% environment. For the REF 2021 procedure the weighting of impact has increased to 25% with output decreasing from 65% to 60% and environment remaining at 15%. For REF 2021 the 'impact template' which describes the approach to enabling impact will be included in the environment assessment therefore impact will actually contribute over 25% of the weighting for REF 2021. This 'impact template' was previously factored into the impact assessment in REF2014.

Allocation of research funding to Scottish HEIs therefore takes into account the impact of research, and (assuming the REG allocation method does not change) will likely factor this in more after the next REF exercise.

Further information on the impact of research is available via: <https://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/publications/research-impact-in-the-year-of-innovation-architecture-and-design/>

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