

Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) Consultation 2019

Page 1: Introduction

Q1. Introduction If you would like to view the questions included in this consultation before submitting your response, an export of the questions for reference purposes is available on the Research England website here: <https://re.ukri.org/documents/2019/summary-of-kef-consultation-questions/> Please return to this online version to submit your response.

Responses to this consultation are invited from any organisation, group or individual with an interest in knowledge exchange. If you would like to save a copy of your response, please choose 'print response' on the last page of the survey. We regret that we won't be able to accommodate requests to download and send individual responses submitted. The responses to this consultation will be analysed by Research England, we will consult with the Knowledge Exchange Framework Technical Advisory Group and the Knowledge Exchange Framework Steering Group. We will commit to read, record and analyse responses to this consultation in a consistent manner. For reasons of practicality, usually a fair and balanced summary of responses rather than the individual responses themselves will inform any decision made. In most cases the merit of the arguments made is likely to be given more weight than the number of times the same point is made. Responses from organisations or representative bodies with high interest in the area under consultation, or likelihood of being affected most by the proposals, are likely to carry more weight than those with little or none. We will publish an analysis of the consultation responses. We may publish individual responses to the consultation in the summary. Where we have not been able to respond to a significant material issue, we will usually explain the reasons for this. Additionally, all responses may be disclosed on request, under the terms of the relevant Freedom of Information Acts across the UK. The Acts give a public right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case UK Research & Innovation. This includes information provided in response to a consultation. We have a responsibility to decide whether any responses, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. We can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. This means that responses to this consultation are unlikely to be treated as confidential except in very particular circumstances. For further information about the Acts see the Information Commissioner's Office website, www.ico.gov.uk or, in Scotland, the website of the Scottish Information Commissioner www.itspublicknowledge.info/home/ For further information relating to UK Research and Innovation's Privacy notice, please visit <https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice/> The deadline for responses to the KEF consultation is midday on Thursday 14 March 2019. Please direct any queries to Sacha Ayres, Senior Policy Adviser, Knowledge Exchange at KEPolicy@re.ukri.org or 0117 931 7385.

Tick here to agree and continue to consultation.

Page 2: Respondent details

Q2. Please indicate who you are primarily responding on behalf of:

Representative body

Page 3: Contact details user

Q3. Please provide the name of your organisation

EAUC - The alliance for sustainability leadership in tertiary education

About us: Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. That's our vision. We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

The membership of the EAUC comprises higher and further educational institutions, with a combined budget of some £25 billion, responsible for educating over 2 million students supported by half a million staff. The majority of our institutional membership are in the Higher Education sector.

We have regional and country chapters, with member institutions connected deeply with business, industry, health and civic bodies at local levels, with reach internationally via their research, innovation and student mobility.

Q4. If you would be happy to be contacted in the event of any follow-up questions, please provide a contact name and email address.

Rosie Saban
rsaban@eauc.org.uk

Page 6: KEF purpose

Q8. Do you consider that the KEF as outlined will fulfil its stated purposes? To provide universities with new tools to understand, benchmark and improve their performance. To provide business and other users with more information on universities. To provide greater public visibility and accountability.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
To provide universities with new tools to understand, benchmark and improve their performance.			X				
To provide businesses and other users with more information on universities.	X						
To provide greater public visibility and accountability.			X				

Q9. Please provide a commentary in relation to your scores above. (400 word limit)

We are unclear on what the 'tool' element of this exercise is, but collating this information will enable HEIs to understand, benchmark and improve their performance. Though we have some questions about the metrics and how fair it is to benchmark a perspective on that basis.

We run the Future Business Council – it is designed to bridge the gap between businesses and universities and colleges when it comes to the graduate skills deficit. We consulted members of this group, and the business factor failed to see how this information would be particularly useful to businesses. Their interest will be on area of knowledge exchange, so the perspectives lack the level of detail that would mean they could filter appropriately. Also, the awareness of this work remains low in the private sector and the returns for business are not made apparent enough.

Page 7: Aims and overall approach of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

Q10. Overall approachThe KEF consultation document describes the overall approach as being an annual, institutional level, largely metrics driven exercise, although noting that narrative will have an important role. More background may be found in the report summarising the recommendations of the technical advisory group. Do you consider this overall approach to be appropriate?

Disagree

Q11. Please provide a commentary in relation to your scores above. (400 word limit)

We agree that this should be an annual and institutional level approach, but struggle with the metrics element. Throughout the information provided on the KEF, it outlines the need for the metrics to provide outputs and outcomes. However, the first 5 perspective metrics only looks at output, while the last 2 only looks at outcomes. It would be more beneficial to have both outcomes and outputs measured in all perspectives. While this would involve more work – it would provide a more robust and useful piece of information.

Page 8: Clustering

Q12. Please indicate your degree of support for the following aspects of our clustering approach.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
The conceptual framework that underpins the cluster analysis.							X
The variables and methods employed in undertaking the cluster analysis.							X
The resulting make up of the clusters, i.e. the membership.							X
That the overall approach to clustering helps Research England to meet the stated purposes of the KEF and ensures fair comparison.							X

Q13. Please provide commentary on any aspect of your scores above. If relevant please incorporate suggestions for alternative arrangements. (400 word limit)

Institutions individually are better placed to state if they feel their categorisation is fair.

Q14. If you are responding on behalf of an institution that is a member of the proposed specialist social science and business (SSB) or STEM clusters as listed below and you wish to provide specific feedback on the appropriateness of these clusters, please identify your cluster membership here. SSB University College Birmingham Bishop Grosseteste University Heythrop College, University of London London Business School National Film and Television School STEM The Institute of Cancer Research Liverpool School of Tropical Med London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine Royal Veterinary College St George's, University of London Cranfield University Harper Adams University Royal Agricultural University Writtle University College

Not applicable

Page 10: Perspectives and metrics

Q16. Perspectives Research partnerships Working with business Working with the public and third sector Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship Local growth and regeneration IP and commercialisation Public and community engagement Taking into account the overall range of perspectives and metrics outlined in the consultation document, do you agree or disagree that a sufficiently broad range of KE activities is captured.

Somewhat agree

Comments:

These largely cover all areas of potential Knowledge Exchange – though the ‘skills’ element is not clear enough. We would like to see sustainability encompassed in one of the perspectives to ensure there is an element of future-proofing the perspectives. It would make most sense for this to be included in skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship perspective and it should require metrics.

Q17. Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document, please indicate whether you consider that they adequately represent performance in each of the proposed perspectives.

Research partnerships	20% support
Working with business	0% support
Working with the public and third sector	0% support
Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship	20% support
Local growth and regeneration	50% support
IP and commercialisation	50% support
Public and community engagement	50% support

Q18. Research partnerships Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

This only looks at funding as a metric – and therefore does not give an incentive to do collaborative research for the public good rather than a financial reward. It means that institutions prioritising work that pays well will always do the best and this feels unhelpful – particularly to smaller Higher Education Institutions. Adding a time element might better capture this. Also – how is the outcome being measured? The output is clear, but the outcome is not.

Q19. Working with business Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

Again, this fails to establish what the outcome or impact was from the output. Having a high output does not equate to a large impact.

These metrics do not encourage knowledge exchange with SMEs, and will likely only engage large businesses that are research focused. They will not broaden the range of businesses involved in Knowledge Exchange as they do not promote this. There is potential to add a metric that looks at the size of business that institutions have worked with, location and the subject area focused. This information would better show the type of business they engage with and give businesses a more useful understanding of a university's area of knowledge expertise . It will also encourage businesses to look in their locality which better supports their community.

There should also be a time metric – to ensure voluntary work with businesses (particularly SMEs) is captured.

Q20. Working with the public and third sector Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

The metrics outlined will capture information from the public sector and large organisations in the third sector, but much like the business perspective, it will not capture or encourage knowledge exchange with small and medium-sized charities that cannot fund research. Time metrics would be better. EAUC facilitates a wealth of knowledge exchange between institutions, businesses and the third sector, and this isn't funded.

Q21. Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

There is potential Knowledge Exchange from non-academics in institutions and these metrics do not take this into account. By focusing on academics, the skills being captured are not necessarily in keeping with those outlined in the Industrial Strategy as being required. For example, the Industrial Strategy calls for 'maths, digital and technical education, helping to boost science, technology, engineering and maths' – the knowledge on these topics and the exchange of this knowledge would come in part from academics, but there is a grey area whereby students further on in their degree would tutor more junior students or non-academic staff could share expertise in these areas, and this information would not be captured. The Industrial Strategy also says that the Government is 'ensuring that businesses have access to the skills they need, wherever they are based in the country, through targeted initiatives that recognise local needs and conditions.' These skills, presumably, should be incorporated under the banner of the KEF – and yet there doesn't seem to be much identification of the skills that businesses need and therefore promotion of knowledge exchange on these skills.

Additionally, little is done in this perspective to look at knowledge exchange on sustainability which includes knowledge on sustainable development and skills required to deliver this domestically and globally. This could equally be called 'employability' – as we know from businesses that these are the skills they are looking for in graduates.

Capturing the quantitative data on 'Learner days' doesn't reflect the impact of these days. There could be a huge difference in the size of audiences receiving these days, or they could be aimed at segments of society that are under-privileged which could therefore have a higher impact. This would then mean one learner day does not equate to another and it becomes difficult to compare them fairly.

This perspective should also include metrics on the percentage of students that undertake placement years.

Q22. Local growth and regeneration Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit) Note there is a separate question to consider the use of supplementary narrative.

The metric outlined is valid, so long as it is in addition to the supplementary narrative .

Q23. IP and commercialisation Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit)

No comment

Q24. Public and community engagement Taking into account the range of metrics outlined in the consultation document for this perspective, please provided any comments on the balance and coverage of the proposed metrics. (400 word limit) Note there is a separate question to consider the use of supplementary narrative.

We particularly like the time orientated metric, though would encourage this to be expanded beyond academic staff to include operational staff that often deliver much of the knowledge exchange as part of community engagement activities.
This could also include 'initiatives/projects/programmes' as events, performances, museums and galleries are all high resource/capacity engagement activities that will put smaller institutions at a disadvantage. Could this also include awards? Many institutions will already have been recognised for their work in this field and it could be a good way of understanding how much impact engagement has had.

Page 11: Supplementary narrative

Q25. Do you consider it appropriate for HEIs to provide narrative text to support the metrics in perspectives that don't currently have fully developed metrics?

Strongly agree

Q26. Public and community engagement narrative Overall, is the guidance on the provision of narrative text for this perspective clear.

Strongly agree

Q27. Please comment on the proposal to include narrative from HEIs for the public and community engagement perspective, in particular: - where further clarification is required- where refinements could be made- whether there are areas where more consistency across HEIs could be achieved (400 word limit)

Narrative is incredibly important in this perspective (it is important in all of them). It recognises that HEIs are different and capturing knowledge exchange is not a 'one size fits all' approach. We recognise that it is tempting to add parameters to narrative information to ensure comparability, but by doing this is undermines the necessity of supplementary narrative in the first place. Our key concern here is that, despite the clusters, it is not clear how perspectives including narrative will translate into decile rank.

Q28. Local growth and regeneration narrative Overall, is the guidance on the provision of narrative text for this perspective clear.

Strongly agree

Q29. Please comment on the proposal to include narrative from HEIs for the local growth and regeneration perspective, in particular: - where further clarification is required- where refinements could be made- whether there are areas where more consistency across HEIs could be achieved (400 word limit)

Same as above.

Q30. The role of further narrative or contextual information We welcome responses on what other types of narrative or contextual information would be helpful. You may wish to consider, for example: Should the HEI or Research England provide other narrative information? How should we use other contextual information, such as information on local economic competitiveness described in section 5 of the cluster analysis report? Would other perspectives benefit significantly from further narrative information? Would the benefit of adding further narrative information be outweighed by the burden of doing so?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
Overarching institutional statement - provided by the HEI						X	
Overarching institutional statement - provided by Research England			X				
Comments:							
Yes – very much so. While we appreciate further narrative is time-consuming to process and analyse, it is only burdensome if accurate and fair information is not valued. To call this information robust, and then not enable an accurate picture of an institution's Knowledge Exchange to form, would be wrong.							

Page 12: Visualisation

Q31. Visualisation Please indicate your level of support for the proposed method of comparison and visualisation. (A link to a video walkthrough of the KEF visualisation is available here.)

Each of the seven perspectives is to be given equal weighting.	75% support
Metrics under each perspective are to be normalised and summed.	20% support
The performance of each HEI is to be expressed in a radar chart in deciles, relative to the mean average decile of the peer group.	0% support
Perspectives are not intended to be aggregated into a single score.	100% support
Narratives are to be presented alongside the metric score, making it clear that metrics in the two perspectives of public & community engagement and local growth & regeneration are provisional, and should be read in conjunction with the narratives.	100% support
Visualisation is to be delivered through an interactive, online dashboard which will allow exploration of the data underlying the 'headline' results in various ways.	100% support

Page 13: Implementation

Q33. We will pilot the implementation with a group of HEIs as described in the consultation document. Please provide any comments about the implementation of the KEF. (200 word limit)

We would be happy to help engage institutions for the pilot through our membership – we have over 200 universities and colleges.

Page 14: Any other comments

Q34. If you have any other comments, please share them here. (400 word limit)

Again, we are happy to provide further assistance or information on this if useful.