Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) briefing

This briefing focuses on the way in which public and community engagement and local growth and regeneration feature in the proposed framework.
Introduction and overview of the KEF

What is Knowledge Exchange?

Knowledge exchange: Research England are committed to enhancing the contribution higher education (HE) makes to the economy and society. Institutions already engage with the wider world in many different ways. But we provide specific funds and support that encourages them to do this more effectively. In return, it seeks to bring the inspiration of that wider world back into universities and colleges.

The KEF has two main purposes:

• To provide universities with a useful source of information and data on their knowledge exchange (KE) activities, for the purposes of understanding, benchmarking and improving their own performance.
• To provide businesses and other users (and potential users) of university knowledge with another source of information, which may increase visibility of potential university partners and their strengths, and contribute to their internal decision making processes.

Currently, it is not decided if and how the KEF will be linked to funding. This is expected to be addressed as part of a pilot phase, which concludes later this year.

The design of the KEF

There are two key aspects to the design of the KEF:

• Research England have proposed a methodology to cluster English universities in to broad types, to enable fair comparisons between them. There are currently 8 such clusters.
• Institution’s performance will be represented through seven perspectives, broad domains within which universities typically exchange knowledge with wider society. Their performance will be described through the use of existing metrics, in some cases with a short narratives to provide context. These seven perspectives will be equally weighted. The intention is to minimise the burden on HEIs by utilizing existing data sets where possible, and involving no external peer review or scrutiny.
The seven perspectives

The KEF is currently organised around seven different ‘perspectives’ – broad domains within which universities typically exchange knowledge with wider society. These are detailed below. The proposal is that one to three metrics are identified for each of these perspectives, derived from existing data, which will allow meaningful comparisons to be drawn between clusters of universities:

- 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

The proposed metrics

The consultation proposes that the following metrics are used for the different perspectives, drawing on existing data:

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<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Proposed metrics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research partnerships</td>
<td>• Contribution to collaborative research (cash and in-kind) as proportion of public funding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Co-authorship with non-academic partners as a proportion of total outputs (data provider)</td>
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<td>Working with business</td>
<td>• Innovate UK income (KTP and grant) as proportion of research income</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Contract research income with businesses per academic Full Time Equivalent (FTE)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consultancy income with businesses per academic FTE</td>
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<td>Working with the public and third sector</td>
<td>• Contract research income with the public and third sector per academic FTE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Consultancy income with the public and third sector per academic FTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship</td>
<td>• CPD/CE income per academic FTE</td>
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<td>• CPD/CE learner days delivered per academic FTE</td>
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<td>• Graduate start-ups rate by student FTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local growth and regeneration</td>
<td>• Regeneration and development income from all sources per academic FTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP and commercialisation</td>
<td>• Additional narrative/contextual information</td>
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<td>• Research resource (income) per spin-out</td>
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<td>• Average external investment per formal spin-out</td>
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<td>Licensing and other IP income as proportion of research income</td>
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<td>Public and community engagement</td>
<td>• Time per academic staff FTE committed to public and community engagement (paid and free) across:</td>
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<td>• Events</td>
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<td>• Performances</td>
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<td>• Museums and galleries</td>
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<td>• Additional narrative/contextual information</td>
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Our focus
The NCCPE’s interest is particularly in two of these areas

• **Public and community engagement**
  "Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public and communities. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit."

• **Local growth and regeneration**
  “Activity where higher education institutions, businesses, public sector and the wider civil society work together to achieve a strategic goal with a prime focus on local growth or regeneration in a self-defined local area. This may include local economic development, social inclusion, public space or infrastructure improvements and reconversion of brownfield areas”.

Interaction with the **Public and Third Sector** will be reflected through two metrics: contract research income and consultancy income per academic
The consultation outlines an approach to visualising the KEF data and making it useful to different audiences. Various dashboards are proposed, and have been mocked up on the Research England website for fictional universities.

This dashboard provides an overview of how a placeholder institution (‘University of STEM’) ‘performs’ against the seven perspectives, and in relation to other universities in its cluster (in this case, specialist STEM institutions).

The shaded areas represents their performance. The blue line represents the cluster average.
This dashboard allows comparisons to be drawn with other HEIs in their cluster – or in other clusters.

The red box highlights information about public and community engagement. It shows how placeholder University Arts4 (green line) significantly outperforms University of Eo (shaded area) and the cluster average (blue line) in this perspective.
This dashboard will allow users to ‘dig deeper’ into individual perspectives to compare HEIs – in this case this is mocked up for the IP and Commercialisation perspective, for which three metrics are proposed:

- Research income
- Average investment per spin out
- Licensing and other IP income

An animated walkthrough of these dashboards is available on the Research England website: [https://re.ukri.org/knowledge-exchange/knowledge-exchange-framework/](https://re.ukri.org/knowledge-exchange/knowledge-exchange-framework/)
Before drilling deeper into the proposed metrics for Public and Community engagement, we are interested to know:

• In principle, do these dashboards offer a useful source of intelligence to inform your decision about whether to engage with an HEI? Would you use these to inform your decisions about if and how to approach a university?
• What do you like?
• What if any improvements would you recommend?
Capturing HE activity in public and community engagement in the KEF

For this perspective, and for Local Growth, Research England are suggesting that the proposed metric should be accompanied by a short (two page) narrative. This narrative won’t be formally assessed but ‘will form part of the overall institutional picture presented by the KEF’.

The metric they are proposing for public and community engagement, which is already captured through an annual survey which all HEIs complete is:

Time per academic staff FTE committed to public and community engagement (paid and free) across:
- Events
- Performances
- Museums and galleries

They propose that the accompanying narrative should be structured around the template outlined in the box on the right.

Proposed narrative template for Public and Community Engagement

1. Institution name
2. Contact details: The contact details provided should be relevant to the public engagement activities of the institution. The information will be published as part of the narrative statement and can be a named individual or a generic contact point.
3. Context: This is an opportunity to provide any additional contextual information in reference to this perspective, such as:
   i. Internal context i.e. institution’s mission or research and teaching characteristics.
   ii. External context i.e. self-defined local area, such as geographical location, local economy, population, socio-economic context.
4. Strategic goals: A brief overview of your strategic goals relating to public and community engagement, including reference to how you ensure these are embedded and recognised throughout your organisation. E.g. has your institution developed any policies or procedures, undertaken any structured self-assessment or made any external commitments in relation to this perspective?
5. Activity: What public and community engagement activity has been developed to deliver your strategic goals, who is involved?
6. Outputs and potential outcomes: What are the outputs and potential outcomes of your public and community engagement activity, on whom, how is it measured?
7. External recognition or awards: have you received any external recognition for your activity as an institution or for individual projects? For example NCCPE’s Engage Watermark or equivalent?
Your views: the representation of public and community engagement

We are interested in your views.

The proposed metric: time spent by academics on events / performances/ museum based activity

• Is this a meaningful metric for you? Would being able to compare the relative amount of time academics typically spend on these activities help inform your decision about whether to engage with the university?
• Can you suggest other metrics which would be more useful and meaningful?

The narrative account

• Would you find the publication of brief, standardised narratives by HEIs outlining their public and community engagement activity a valuable development?
• Do the headings in the draft template address the critical questions you would want to see addressed?
• Do you think it matters that these narratives won’t be reviewed or assessed by Research England?
1. **Institution name**

2. **Contact details**: The contact details provided should be relevant to the public engagement activities of the institution. The information will be published as part of the narrative statement and can be a named individual or a generic contact point.

3. **Context**: What is distinctive about how your institution approaches public and community engagement?
   - Internally: how is engagement reflected in your mission and embedded in your teaching and research?
   - Externally: what are your priorities in terms of place (your geographical reach); people (do you focus on particular communities); and outcomes (have you identified priority outcome areas)?

4. **Strategic commitment to public and community engagement**: Please indicate your progress with the indicators below (where 1 is not in place; and 4 is fully realised)
   - There is a strategic and operational plan in place for PE/CE as a result of an inclusive process across the whole HEP and with external partner input
   - There is a budget allocated to PE / CE with explicit and ambitious targets
   - There is regular and systematic reporting on the activity and its impact, with agreed KPIs
   - There is a senior leader with formal responsibility for PE/CE (or that responsibility is distributed clearly across several senior staff)
   - There are specialist staff employed to provide support and advice
   - There are promotion / career pathways to support staff progression which are well used

5. **Providing community access to your facilities and expertise**: Please indicate your progress with the indicators below (where 1 is not in place; and 4 is fully realised)
   - We enable the public to access and make use of our facilities and assets (e.g. sporting and cultural) and to signpost these opportunities
   - We have a transparent process for communities to contact the university and establish contact with our staff and to have their enquiries dealt with promptly and professionally
   - We ensure staff and student expertise is accessible to communities, and actively support our people to take up voluntary roles in the community

6. **Involving communities in your research and teaching**: Please indicate your progress with the indicators below (where 1 is not in place; and 4 is fully realised)
   - We provide a clearly signposted and high quality portfolio of purposeful learning and engagement opportunities for the public which are robustly evaluated
   - We actively involve the public in our research activities, and provide expert support to facilitate this
### Narrative report: Public and Community Engagement perspective

7. **Commitment to partnership working and social responsibility**

- We have a systematic and managed approach to partnership working with civic, community and cultural partners in our region, and beyond  
  - 1 2 3 4

- We have developed a set of principles which underpin our approach to partnership working, addressing issues such as payment, IP, equity and sustainability  
  - 1 2 3 4

- Our procurement and employment practices seek to maximise benefits for our local communities  
  - 1 2 3 4

- We have a strategy in place to direct our efforts to address equality and diversity in our interactions with wider society, and processes in place to monitor this  
  - 1 2 3 4

8. **External recognition or awards**: Have you received any external recognition for your activity as an institution or for individual projects? For example NCCPE’s Engage Watermark or equivalent?
Your views: the NCCPE’s alternative approach

We are interested in your views.

The proposed metric: an aggregate score compiled from institutional self assessment against various indicators of effective support

- Would this provide a more meaningful and useful representation of an HEI’s activity?
- What are its strengths? What are the weaknesses?
- It would add a greater burden on HEIs to complete. Do you think this would be worth the extra effort?
- Are there some key indicators missing which you would want to see highlighted?
- Which indicators do you think could be dropped to simplify the approach?
- Are you concerned that this is in effect universities ‘marking their own homework’? How important would it be for these assessments to be externally reviewed for you to have confidence in them?

The narrative account
The KEF’s is intended to provide external organisations with a ‘source of information, which may increase visibility of potential university partners and their strengths, and contribute to their internal decision making processes’

- Would you find a published narrative useful?
- Which of the approaches would you prefer – the one suggested in the consultation, or the one proposed by the NCCPE? Why?
- How would you like to see this narrative information presented?
Capturing HE activity in Local Growth and Regeneration

We are also interested in your views about the Local Growth and Regeneration perspective.

The **metric** they are proposing for local growth and regeneration is already captured through an annual survey which all HEIs complete:

*Regeneration and development income from all sources per academic*

They propose that the **accompanying narrative** should be structured around the template outlined in the box on the right – which is similar to the one proposed for Public and Community engagement.

Proposed narrative template

1. **Institution name**
2. **Contact details**: The contact details provided should be relevant to the local growth and regeneration activities of the institution. The information will be published as part of the narrative statement and can be a named individual or a generic contact point.
3. **Context**: This is an opportunity to provide any additional contextual information in reference to this perspective, such as:
   i. Internal context i.e. institution’s mission or research and teaching characteristics.
   ii. External context i.e. self-defined local area, such as geographical location, local economy, population, socio-economic context.
4. **Strategic goals**: A brief overview of your strategic goals relating to local growth and regeneration including reference to how your institution ensures these goals are embedded and recognised? E.g. has your institution enacted any policies or procedures or made any external commitments in relation to this perspective?
5. **General knowledge exchange activity, outputs and outcomes**
   • What knowledge exchange activities are undertaken to meet your wider institutional strategic goals, but which also achieve outcomes that relate to local growth and regeneration as a consequence of your location. (E.g. If you are undertaking public engagement which is focused on your local area, you may wish to record any outcomes within this local growth perspective.)
   • In what way do these knowledge exchange activities link to outcomes relating to local growth, how is it measured?
6. **Targeted knowledge exchange activity, outputs and outcomes in relation to local growth and regeneration**
   • What specific targeted activities take place to support local growth and regeneration and who is involved?
   • What are the outputs and potential outcomes of your activity, on whom, how is it measured?
7. **External recognition or awards**: have you received any external recognition for your activity and outcomes as an institution or for individual projects?
Alternative narrative template for Local Growth and Regeneration

**Strategic investment to maximise our local impact**
- There are partnership agreements in place that have been co-designed with stakeholders that articulate shared targets and goals for your activity
- There is regular and systematic reporting on the activity and its impact, with agreed KPIs
- There is a senior leader with formal responsibility for local growth and regeneration (or that responsibility is distributed clearly across several senior staff)
- There is investment in expertise and resources to support effective monitoring and evaluation, and a systematic approach to gathering evidence

**Supporting the educational growth of a place:** *which encompasses the institution’s interaction with school aged population, and with mature learners, such as adult, community and lifelong learning; and to support skills and employment outcomes for local people*
- Our widening participation and ‘outreach’ activity seeks to actively contribute to attainment and employability of local populations
- We have a strategic approach to deploying our staff and student expertise, research and other assets to boost overall attainment in our region
- We take a strategic approach to meeting the skills and development needs of local employers
- We provide a clearly signposted and high quality portfolio of learning opportunities for local people, which are robustly evaluated
- We seek to actively involve local publics and partners in our research, teaching and knowledge exchange activities, and provide expert support to facilitate this

**Supporting the economic life of a place:** *which encompasses the institution acting as a model employer and its procurement practices, its local ‘convening’ role, and its role as an economic catalyst*
- We are a living wage employer (4 or nothing)
- We actively support our people to take up voluntary roles in the community
- Our procurement policies activity seek to deliver value to our locality
- We contribute actively to a range of local strategic partnerships (e.g. LEPs)
- We provide significant support to local spin out companies and enterprises
- We ensure our estate development plans have maximum impact on local place making and economic development

**Supporting the cultural wellbeing of a place:** *which encompasses the institution’s participation in and contribution to the cultural life of their areas; its support for the cultural and creative industries through work with local partners; and its contribution to ‘place making’*
- We seek to maximise opportunities for our staff and students to actively participate in the cultural life of our region
- We have taken every effort to enable the public to access and make use of our sporting and cultural facilities and assets, and to signpost these opportunities
- We make a significant contribution to the vitality and sustainability of local cultural and creative industries
- We have a strategic approach to supporting local cultural infrastructure, for instance museums and public libraries
We are interested in your views on the proposed domains and indicators:

- Do these domains and indicators capture the key dimensions that you would be interested in, if you wanted to approach or interact with a university in the context of its local knowledge exchange activity?
- Are some key domains or indicators missing which you would want to see highlighted?
- Which indicators do you think could be dropped to simplify the approach?
The National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) is internationally recognised for its work supporting and inspiring universities to engage with the public.

We work to change perspectives, promote innovation, and nurture and celebrate excellence. We also champion meaningful engagement that makes a real and valued difference to people’s lives.

The NCCPE is supported by the UK Higher Education Councils, Research Councils UK and Wellcome, and has been hosted by the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England since it was established in 2008.