

### Research Wales Innovation Fund Strategy 2020/21 – 2022/23

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#### Section A: Overview

##### 1. Strategic ambitions

*Please provide an overview of your institution's 3 year [and beyond if longer term plans are available] approach to research and innovation activity which will be supported by RWIF. You may wish to highlight broad areas which you are targeting, and describe how RWIF funding will align with your institutional mission and internal strategies. [max 300 words]*

The University of South Wales is a leading University with a significant economic impact and strong track record of applied research that informs policy and practice. Alongside our research strategy and engagement plan, our innovation strategy builds on our considerable success in driving economic growth and prosperity, steered by the PVC Innovation as Executive lead. Our approach aligns with our University vision in our new USW2030 strategy "To Change Lives and our World for the Better". By working in collaboration with industry, our research and innovation will tackle some of the biggest global challenges, from energy to health to security, and provide answers to real-world problems. We will maximise the positive impact for our communities, partners and students who are the leaders, decision-makers and influencers of the future - in industry, research and society.

##### **Key Theme 1: Our research & innovation impact**

We are an applied university; it is part of our heritage and culture to engage our students and staff on industry-identified challenges to help them make societal and economic impact.

##### **Key Theme 2: Our knowledge and skills exchange for student and strategic partner benefit**

We will provide an ecosystem that supports enterprise and innovation, investing in strategic partner relationships and supporting new ventures, to bring long-term benefits to students, communities, business and government.

##### **Key Theme 3: Our contribution to economic and societal well-being**

We will extend our reach beyond Wales to ensure that policy is derived from research-based evidence, and we will support businesses to innovate in developing new products and services which help grow the knowledge economy.

##### **Key Theme 4: Our connected and responsible organisation**

We will act as a hub and catalyst for economic and social prosperity through connecting business and communities, and evidence best practice in our commitment to sustainability (environmental, economic and social).

## 2. Capacity Grant

*Provide some narrative on how your institution plans to make use of the capacity grant included within RWIF, and the one-off Innovation Capacity Development Fund (see paragraph 14 in Circular W20/09HE for further guidance on the Capacity Grant). How will this be used to support and enhance capacity and incentivise and improve performance in knowledge exchange? [max 300 words]*

Key to the delivery of our Innovation Strategy is the capacity and experience within our Knowledge Exchange teams. They are central to supporting both our academic staff to engage with Innovation activities, and in building collaborative relationships with partners to maximise economic impact and civic engagement.

We will utilise the Capacity Grant to underpin areas of key focus. This will allow us to drive commercialisation of our research to help develop economic impact in the region, support business growth and facilitate our civic mission ambitions. We will maintain the funding stream for key staff members who impact on Engagement, Civic Mission, Enterprise/Employability and graduate entrepreneurship activity.

Funded posts are planned to include: two Engagement Managers to drive partnership and engagement activity with industry partners/employers; a Civic Mission Officer role to continue to drive USW's civic engagement agenda; an Enterprise Officer to ensure Youth Entrepreneurship Programme continuity; Manager of the Stiwdio incubator to drive forward graduate enterprise and business support, with a focus on new developments.

We will pivot the existing Strategic Insight Programme Manager (<https://www.southwales.ac.uk/research/work-us/strategic-insight-programme-sip/>) role to broaden across the scope of Exchange activity, ensuring cover across campuses, collaboration with FE, increased business engagement, and oversight of the suite of Exchange Business Support programmes.

Additional resource has been allocated to commercialise and market USW's technical facilities and to lead on the new USW Knowledge Exchange and Innovation Fund commercialisation programme. Our planned CRM system will require resource to ensure successful implementation, and we will bolster our alumni resource to ensure regular connection with our graduate entrepreneurship community. Our CPD portfolio will be supported by additional resource to develop sustainable client relationships and drive income generation, and the growing volume and complexity of our Innovation Contracts will be supported by a specialist Contracts professional.

**Section B: Specific content****3. Commercialisation / income generating activity**

*RWIF has been designed to incentivise and reward performance, particularly in terms of external income capture. Outline the direction of travel for the next three years which will support delivery of the KPIs outlined in 3.1. Provide details on key areas of investment and growth. Outline where RWIF will be used to add value to existing activities, or how it will support new developments. Further guidance on this section is available in Circular W20/09HE. Your response should be framed in terms of social and economic prosperity for Wales. [1000 words max]*

We will focus on key income drivers through the development of a *Knowledge Exchange & Innovation Fund*, supporting internal projects which evidence the potential for significant impact and external income generation through partnerships with local businesses, industry, public and third sector organisations. We will prioritise collaborations within Wales and insist on impact within Wales. Outputs will be closely monitored to ensure a financial impact in the HE-BCI reported income areas i.e., consultancy, collaborative research, contract research, commercial CPD and access to facilities and equipment. Meeting industry needs and encouraging partnership and collaborative growth will be key, with alignment to notable strategies (City and Growth Deals, and Regional Economic Frameworks etc). Initially the fund will focus on projects **addressing and mitigating the health, social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak**

The fund will support staff to engage with businesses and other external organizations with a return expected such as income generation or reputational gain. Projects must support the University Strategy - USW 2030. The scheme will look to support well defined proposals with clearly stated and measurable objectives that deliver tangible outcomes, to support:

- Commercial Consultancy – projects in which an external organisation hires the services of a member of academic staff to use their expertise and existing know-how to help the client solve technical or other problems. The client would normally expect to own the results of the work and deliver commercial income.
- Collaborative Research - involving input and contributions from both the external partner(s) and the University. Partners in collaborative research may bring different aspects to the work e.g. materials, technical know-how, IP, analytical equipment or techniques. It is expected that projects will result in bids for collaborative funding e.g. resultant bid to Innovate UK, which will bring impact to the region.
- Contract Research – projects initiated by an external sponsor with objectives set by the sponsor. Research activity is based in the University, using University resources such as equipment, workshops, laboratories, technical and administrative support staff, and one or more researchers. The results of contract research are expected to be of immediate usefulness to the sponsor, enabling them to bring new products or services to the market and deliver commercial income to us.
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – development and/or provision of CPD to external organisations for the purposes of

upskilling/workforce development, to include short courses, bespoke industry-focused programmes, professional qualifications, and masterclasses, which enables the company to deliver higher quality or more competitive services to the regional economy

- Access to USW Facilities and/or Equipment – access to/hire of USW Facilities and/or Equipment by external organisations, enabling them to grow their business

The university will only fund projects with a direct return on investment aligned to the USW 2030 strategy and in support of the *Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015*. Innovative projects will be approved through an internal rolling bid submission and approval process. Each project will have an allocated knowledge exchange team advisor, to ensure that impact is realised and maximised, and further income generating opportunities are pursued, such as consultancy derived from initial collaborative R&D projects.

To complement this wider investment in Knowledge Exchange and Innovation, we will provide specific support in a number of defined development areas:

We will encourage early stage commercialisation of Intellectual Property through a small but targeted IP fund, supporting the first year of IP protection and the development of commercialisation plans. It will be a prerequisite of any investment that future financial needs will be levered from external sources such as Development Bank for Wales, venture capitalist or commercial entities where appropriate. Expected outcomes will be licensing agreements with other organisations to exploit the IP in new products or services and/or direct spin outs from the university.

We will dedicate resource towards developing a clear offer for the commercialisation of our technical facilities. This will include a detailed audit of all Facilities and Equipment that can be made available to the external community, to include clear information on availability and a communications plan to promote services to business. We will hold 'open days' for Business to increase awareness of our resources, and to encourage the sharing of best practice. This will impact on income recorded in our HE-BCI Equipment and Facilities return and will increase our collaboration and knowledge exchange with industry. Our associated academic expertise will be promoted alongside our technical facilities offer, mainly in the form of consultancy services. Aligned to this we will encourage collaboration with our FE partners in relation to industry access to equipment and facilities, and our HE/FE workshop programme will showcase our joint resource and expertise (as detailed in section 4.1).

In response to the new way of working post Lockdown/Covid19, during 2020/21 we will invest in the development of our online commercial CPD provision. Our staff will undergo extensive training on a range of online platforms to ensure that our provision will suit the needs of a wide variety of external clients on both bespoke closed and open courses. As well as the extensive portfolio we already offer including project management, change management and leadership and development, the new virtual learning will also address the needs of organisations as a result of the pandemic which will include organisational change and critical thinking. Learners will have a range of opportunities to develop and test their skills using our virtual learning platforms.

### 3.1 Provide details of your institution's strategic KPIs for commercialisation and income generating activity:

10% year-on-year increase in income generation across key income streams (Collaborative/Contract Research, Consultancy, Equipment & Facilities, CPD) facilitated by:

- Strategic allocation of £550K Knowledge Exchange & Innovation fund (21/22)
- IP commercialisation fund.
- Technical facility commercialisation: 5 Industry open days; 5 bespoke industry showcases.
- USW Exchange business support activity: 75 funded innovation exchanges with Businesses; CPD sessions, 40 HE/FE workshops.
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Baseline 18/19 income figure: £12.441M

Baseline 19/20 income figure: £12.135M

We will participate in, and collaborate with, the Wales Innovation Network to support their aim of an additional £30M research and innovation income into the Welsh HE sector during the initial three year programme. We will monitor and report on our contribution, including number of bids and income.

### 3.2 How will your strategic approach in this area align with HEFCW's [Research and Innovation: the Vision for Wales](#)? Select the pillars supported:

X Excellence  
X Place  
X Innovation  
X Collaboration

### 3.3 How do your strategic ambitions for commercialisation and income generating activity support the Vision's goals, milestones and ambitions?

[Max 250 words]

Our research strategy sets out the university's commitment to broadening the research base and maximising **excellence** with targeted support and investment. Through our *Knowledge Exchange & Innovation Fund* we will harness this excellence to generate income for the university, region and our partners. Our commitment to the creation of knowledge, its transfer and its application, will help us recruit, develop and retain the best staff to drive our research and innovation priorities and engage in industry-identified challenges that make societal and economic impact.

We understand the importance of research and knowledge exchange which is **place-based**, impacting on our students, business (both large and small), charities, communities and governments. We see research and innovation as an integral part of our mission to help our region play an increasingly important role in

the global economy. Our expertise and technical facilities are key to regional **innovation**, and we are focussed on business support and skills development that encourages the development of new products and services to grow our knowledge economy.

We remain committed to an ethos of **collaborative** inquiry, bringing the impacts of our research insights and innovations into the lives of the local, national and international communities and businesses we serve. The industrial connections that shape our research culture make it genuinely international, multilingual and outward-looking. Our public purpose means we are committed to nurturing a pipeline of talent and to creating an environment that enables all our students and staff to thrive and maximising the resultant impact on and for others.

#### 4. New business growth and skills support

*Outline the support you intend to provide for new start-ups, spin-offs, and meeting the targets of schemes such as the WG's Youth Entrepreneurship Programme. Provide information on where RWIF will add value to existing activities, and where it allows you to invest in further growth. Further guidance on this section is available in Circular W20/09HE. Your response should be framed in terms of social and economic prosperity for Wales. [1000 words max]*

USW Exchange is the hub for collaboration, business support and creating connections with industry at the University of South Wales (<https://www.southwales.ac.uk/business-services/usw-exchange-events-membership/>). Exchange focusses on economic prosperity and community engagement by:

- Providing access to expertise and facilities from across the University
- Facilitating opportunities for Knowledge Exchange, Industry Engagement, Professional Development and Strategic Partnering.
- Providing purpose-built business engagement spaces for remote working, co-location, collaboration and interaction.
- Providing a full schedule of business support events through the Exchange Network for micro businesses and SMEs but also for larger partners.

We will expand our Exchange resource to meet the needs of local industry with a focus on economic regeneration, and to develop new strategic partnerships focussed on industry skills and collaboration. We will fund an Exchange Officer to work alongside our Exchange Manager to:

- Support the development of a wider range of events and business support collaborations across our expanded Exchange Hub provision and online.
- Drive initial support for business through funded Partnership and Engagement activity to scope out Knowledge Exchange opportunities.
- Signpost industry partners to wider business and knowledge exchange support through collaboration with HE/FE networks, Business Support agencies, Welsh Government and other stakeholders.
- Encourage collaboration and continue to develop our HE/FE connections through a programme of funded workshops in collaboration with our Partner

Colleges (continuing our successful Partnership for Innovation in Education programme).

- Integrate online CPD sessions into our Exchange events programming, to provide industry upskilling and support.

Within Exchange we will continue to support our Engagement Manager resource, focussing on developing and formalising relationships with external organisations, supporting long-term, sustainable activity that increases our cultural, societal and economic impact. This will be driven by USW's 2030 strategy, ensuring we are well placed to exploit emerging opportunities by working collaboratively with key stakeholders. The Engagement Managers will ensure that our business community are fully aware of the opportunities available for engagement: from facilities and placements, to curriculum input and research collaboration. Existing relationships will be mapped to ensure a joined-up approach to partnership across the institution and to identify new opportunities for industry collaboration and engagement. The Engagement Managers will be advocates of Knowledge Exchange, and mentor academic colleagues to maximise their industry engagement activities.

USW Exchange will lead on a Partnership & Engagement Programme to enhance and grow sustainable business collaboration with USW and facilitate access to expertise. There will be a range of support to develop meaningful partnerships, pump-prime future commercial opportunities and identify collaborative opportunities. Businesses will be encouraged to partner with USW in one or more of the following strands:

- Enabling Economic Prosperity & Business Growth
- Establishing Industry-Academic Partnerships
- Enhancing Workforce Skills
- Enabling Civic Prosperity & Civic Engagement.

Each strand interaction will provide short-term academic diagnostic, scoping or feasibility support from USW. Each engagement will be supported by the USW Exchange External Engagement team, who will identify next steps in terms of future collaboration and innovation support (e.g. Welsh Government, Innovate etc.) Taster sessions of our commercial CPD provision will be made available at no cost to Exchange Members/Industry partners, focussing on agility, leadership, and change management.

To ensure the robust implementation of our external engagement and client management strategy across the institution, we will implement a comprehensive CRM system which will bring together knowledge exchange and industry partnership activity to be mapped, shared and managed. This will be overseen by our External Engagement Managers, and will record relationships that feed into all aspects of our Innovation Strategy, from collaborative research partners to Exchange business hub members, allowing us to maximise our existing industry links, and develop and grow new partnerships. USW staff with a focus on knowledge exchange and industry engagement will have access to the resource.

Our strong links with FE are a key element of our 2030 institutional strategy, and we recognise the importance of a joined-up approach to innovation and industry engagement in the region. We will build on the significant success of our HE/FE collaborative 'Partnership in Innovation for Education' programme (<https://www.southwales.ac.uk/research/work-us/strategic-insight-programme-sip/>), with a comprehensive industry-focussed workshop programme. The workshops will reinforce and build on the strong collaborative links between USW and the five regional FE institutions, expanding on existing Industry links and supporting inward investment in the region.

The workshops will:

- share high level applied research and its application in the region
- support the development of industry engagement and staff upskilling
- promote progression into new areas of learning in new and emerging technologies and access to specialist kit/ resources and expertise.
- encourage community engagement (civic mission) that enables local people to access jobs/ upskilling

Our priority for workshops will be linked to the areas of distinctiveness in our 2030 strategy, allowing us to continue to drive key themes from the previous HE/FE programme (such as Creative and Compound Semi-conductor) but also to develop our networks further. Each workshop will be developed into a case study to inform teaching, research and further engagement. Where there would be value in doing so, we will allow FE institutions from outside of the SE Wales region to collaborate with us and our partner colleges.

Our Business Growth and Skills activity will be complemented by our collaborative partnership with UWTSD, supported by the HE Investment and Recovery Fund. Our Engagement Team form a key part of the Joint USW/UWTSD Employer Engagement Taskforce, and a team of Academic School representatives have dedicated Innovation Champion roles, to drive innovation and share best practice. The Innovation agenda will be further driven through programmes of Community Upskilling, Civic Action, Enterprise and the Welsh Institute of Digital Information.

USW is committed to being an enterprising University which grows the number of graduates starting their own business; helps a greater number of graduate enterprises to survive three years; develops more university spin-out companies; creates a vibrant community of entrepreneurial alumni to support graduate enterprises; and embeds enterprise and entrepreneurship skills for students to support their future careers. A revised enterprise and entrepreneurship strategy will drive this commitment. Support for students showing an interest in starting their own businesses will be targeted and prioritised. The Stiwdio Incubator (<https://startup.southwales.ac.uk/stiwdio/>) will receive additional funding for one year allowing expansion of the concept into our Newport City Campus and the creation of a virtual online business support service for off campus graduate businesses (including a virtual start-up summer school and an online business boot-camp).

Enterprise resource will be funded to sustain and build entrepreneurial capacity through the delivery of Engage, Empower and Equip activities to students and



graduates as an evolution of the Welsh Government Youth Entrepreneurship programme. This will focus on supporting students and graduates through a journey of *Engaging*: raising the profile of entrepreneurship as a career, *Empowering*: developing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge and *Equipping*: validating and testing business ideas, 1-2-1 support and business start-Up support. To ensure the fullest possible reflection of USW's graduate entrepreneur network, alumni resource will be funded to record and showcase graduate enterprise success. Helping monitor and liaise with graduate entrepreneurs, this will complement programming aimed at nascent student/graduate enterprises and provide an opportunity to accurately track entrepreneurs as they progress from start-up phase.

#### 4.1 Provide details of your institution's strategic KPIs for new business growth and skills support

##### External Engagement

The success of our wide-ranging External Engagement activity will be driven by five themes, many of which impact on National Measures/HE-BCI and the growth outlined in our income generation/commercialisation KPIs:

- **Research Value (RV)**- direct or indirect, generated through research activities such as collaborative projects.
- **Commercial Value (CV)**- relating to income generated through commercial activity or collaboration.
- **Educational Value (EV)**- contributing to student and/or professional development, usually curriculum or training based.
- **Leverage Value (LV)**- derived through collaborative relationships.
- **Association Value (AV)**- consequentially obtained from an interaction with another party; student, business, etc.

Our engagement activity will be focussed on New Business Growth, Skills Support, HE/FE Collaboration & Partnership Development activity, with targets for:

- 100 new Exchange members per annum
- 40 HE/FE industry focussed workshops per annum
- 5 new strategic partnerships per annum
- 75 innovation exchanges with Businesses through the Partnership and Engagement Programme
- CPD taster sessions for the Exchange Membership Network
- Implementation of CRM system

##### Start-ups and Youth Entrepreneurship

Our Enterprise and Entrepreneurship activity will be measured across five themes:

- **Engage** - Raise awareness of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship support across USW students and graduates: 3000 per annum
- **Empower** - Students building enterprise knowledge and skills: 300 per annum
- **Equip** - Students receiving support to start businesses through tailored support, test trading and start-up boot camps: 100 per annum
- **Business Starts** - Students and graduates starting a business: 40 per annum

- **Start-Up Community** - USW Alumni entrepreneurship network: 1000 (to include 10 case studies)

**4.2 How will your strategic approach in this area align with HEFCW's [Research and Innovation: the Vision for Wales](#)? Select the pillars supported:**

- Excellence
- X Place
- X Innovation
- X Collaboration

**4.3 How do your strategic ambitions for new business growth and skills support the Vision's goals, milestones and ambitions?**

[Max 250 words]

Our Exchange activity is strongly **place-based**, driven by our focus on business support and partnerships and coupled with our engagement with local communities. Our physical Exchange Hubs in Newport and Treforest are a resource for industry collaboration, knowledge exchange and networking, providing a collaboration space rooted in the community and region. Our Stiwdio Business Incubator in Cardiff supports Creative Industry and related start-up companies, with plans to expand to Newport to complement our new Exchange Hub facility.

**Collaboration** is at the centre of all Exchange and Enterprise activity – from our physical collaborative spaces to our partnership activity. A comprehensive events programme is provided in partnership with industry partners and business support organisations. HE/FE collaboration is a key focus and will continue to be driven through a series of collaborative workshops across HE, FE and industry. Knowledge exchange is celebrated and encouraged through business events, podcasts and webinars, and collaborative opportunities to support the business community are promoted through networking and regular membership communications.

**Innovation** is evidenced through the development of new industry-academic partnerships, with new collaboration opportunities explored and developed. Skills development for industry will be driven through a variety of mechanisms, including collaborative programming with business support agencies; free of charge CPD sessions focussed around key business topics including project management, leadership, and change; signposting to longer term professional and academic programmes tailored to business need. An innovative programme of Enterprise provision is knitted throughout our curriculum, with Stiwdio providing expert advice, support, mentoring and access to partners.

**5. Civic Mission and Public Engagement**

*Outline how RWIF will support continued or new activity across your communities. Place-based civic mission is broad, incorporating a vast range of activities including support within the community to meet the skills needs of industry, HE-FE*

*partnerships in skills, innovation and engagement, public engagement through research, and meeting societal challenges. Support for the community within university premises for e.g. events, lectures etc, would also be a means of supporting civic mission. Further guidance on this section is available in Circular W20/09HE. Your response should be framed in terms of social and economic prosperity for Wales. [1000 words max]*

The University of South Wales has a defining mission towards the prosperity and well-being of the communities we live among and serve. With its origins in the Newport Mechanics Institute (founded in 1841) and the South Wales and Monmouthshire School of Mines, it has demonstrated a commitment to educating local people, providing the necessary skills for local, national and international careers. Today it's 2030 Vision places an emphasis on inclusion, promoting access and participation in higher education, and enhanced support for students from under-represented communities. It aims to "build supportive, trusting and professional relationships with civic leaders to maximise positive change and outcomes for our region and beyond".

The University continues to engage with policy makers in advisory roles through key commercial and research groups including the Welsh Institute of Health and Social Care, Sustainable Environment Research Centre and the Centre for Criminology. Its research ethos is focused on providing solutions to problems that affect society and the economy. An example of this can be found in the work of Dr Mike Chick who has devised English Language programmes for refugees living in the area, enabling them to actively participate in society and the cultural landscape of South Wales. The project will be funded to develop a training programme for educators in online or digital ESOL provision. The researchers have informed Welsh Government's Refugee and Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan 2019, which has centralised ESOL provision as a key priority for future policy.

USW's Civic Engagement commitment will continue to be supported by the dedicated Civic Mission Officer and supplemented by a range of external events and communications. This activity will knit into related Exchange activity (including HE/FE workshops and Business Support activities), ensuring one clear external voice. Key commitments in relation to Innovation and Business Support funding will have defined Civic Mission strands, for example the first Knowledge Exchange & Innovation Fund call will be for Covid19 related research and collaboration activities.

The Civic Mission Officer contributes to the development of USW's Civic Action Scheme, which is supported by HEFCW's Higher Education Investment and Recovery Fund. This project, in collaboration with the University of Wales, Trinity St David, aims to develop a cohort of civically-minded students who actively volunteer and offer support to the communities of South Wales.

In the academic year 2018-19, a Civic Mission audit was undertaken at USW to chart how its research, teaching and scholarly activity is having a positive impact upon the communities of South Wales. A report was produced which documents the University's current civic engagement activities ([https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XcfloKq2v\\_wLfDVK11WBGdGLhIHgC4L/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XcfloKq2v_wLfDVK11WBGdGLhIHgC4L/view)). It also highlights how our work with community leaders, cultural organisations, Welsh Government and the third sector enable us to promote social cohesion, promote

health and well-being, and represent the communities of South Wales in political and cultural discourses.

The report also outlined a series of recommendations that will allow the University to improve its civic engagement (see section 5.1). Innovation fund support will also be used to continue work which has already been initiated including:

#### Wales Women in STEM (WWiST) Collaborative Network

In response to the HEFCW remit letter 2019-20, in which Kirsty Williams praised the progress made to address the recommendations set out in the Talented Women for a Successful Wales Report, USW will maintain the WWiST Collaborative Network (<https://www.waleswomenstem.org/>). The initiative has received encouragement from Welsh Government, industry leaders and STEM educators, and the co-ordinators have actively participated in Welsh Government's Women in STEM board, as well as its industry and communications sub-groups. The Wales Women in STEM inaugural symposium was opened by Jane Hutt AM. Working alongside Katie Weeks (Senior Science Officer, Welsh Government) we have been alerted to the initial findings in the 'Baseline Evidence and Research Project for Gender Equality in STEM' currently undertaken by Arad Research. The aim of this work is to prioritise resources and actions for the WISTEM board and sub-groups. One of the most significant findings from the project is that interventionalist strategies to increase the number of women and girls engaging in STEM has been successful.

In response to the findings from this report, we have developed an action plan of future activity which will continue to address gender inequality in STEM. Support from HEFCW will enable us to implement this action plan, which has received feedback and approval from the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt. WWiST proposes the following activity:

- Revise and enhance our communications plan and website;
- Work with the Minister for Social Justice and Welsh Government's Equality in STEM board to identify where interventions are needed;
- Identify training opportunities and make these visible through our communications channels;
- Call for the monitoring of interventions, and encourage employers to obtain an Accreditation for Gender Equality in STEM;
- Continue to host events that promote the work of women in STEM industry, education and research.

WWiST will develop a podcast series called 'STEM Stories: Conversations about Careers in Science'. Each podcast will feature individuals at different stages of their careers in dialogue with each other. They will discuss their achievements to date and any gender-related challenges they have faced. There will be five podcasts, focussing on: STEM and the Government; Forensic Science; Research and Higher Education; the Environment; Culture and Preservation. In addition to this, we will continue to enhance the WWiST website and network, ensuring content is fit for purpose and responsive to the needs of the STEM community.

#### Civic Activity Fund

A Civic Activity Fund will be developed as a collaboration between USW and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Grants of £1,000 will be made available to facilitate research and engagement activity that would directly benefit the community. The fund will promote activity in the following areas:

- Cultural democracy and inclusion;
- The value of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences;
- Creativity and Performance;
- Interdisciplinarity and collaboration;
- Life-long learning and education.

We will host a public event in which researchers at each institution outline the impact of their work on community well-being.

#### Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

As part of the USW Group, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama will continue to make a substantial contribution to the cultural life of Wales, promoting some 350 public performances a year by students and leading artists, and supporting public events hosted at the College by some of its key community partner organisations. A major objective for the public performance programme will be to diversify content further and engage a wider range of audiences. The College will also extend its touring programme in Wales, and develop a digital public programme, complementing the live public performances and extending reach and access. The College will continue to deliver a lively community participation programme for all ages, both year-round and through a diverse programme of Summer Schools. It will particularly focus on working increasingly closely with a community partnership network, and use this to develop clear progression routes from initial project activity to more sustained engagement over time.

### **5.1 Provide details of your institution's strategic KPIs for civic mission and public engagement**

Our previous civic mission audit and report made recommendations as to how USW can increase its social impact on the community. These recommendations will be enacted through RWIF investment and include enhancing civic engagement:

- Through communication. We will make visible our civic engagement both internally and externally. We will also articulate a strategic commitment to community engagement and the *Well-Being for Future Generations Act (2015)*.
- Through public engagement: We will continue to host events, workshops and public lectures as a 'hub' for civic engagement.
- Through critical pedagogy: We will support academic disciplines that question institutionalised norms and behaviours.
- Through funding: We will provide a flexible fund for USW staff to support civic engagement activities.
- Through an agreement with anchor institutions, which will outline where the long- and short-term problems lie.
- Through the public use of our facilities: We will encourage community groups and external partners (particularly charities and voluntary groups) to make use of our sites for community meetings, exhibitions, art groups, and fundraising.
- Through equality and diversity: We will continue to promote this agenda with initiatives, such as the Wales Women in STEM: Collaborative Initiative, and the Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme (WUMS). Pre-Covid the Wales Women in STEM initiative was hosting an annual pan Wales event and several smaller events throughout the year. During lockdown all events are bite-size and online, and as detailed above we will be hosting a podcast series.
- The audit also revealed the need to recognise and reward academics who engage in civic activities by encouraging them to publish their work. The report

also highlighted the need to share best practice and showcase the work that Welsh HEIs are doing in relation to civic mission. We will make use of USW's communications channels to highlight civic engagement successes.

- We will also work with colleagues participating in the newly established Universities Wales Civic Mission Network to identify civic opportunities.
- We will also continue with our Community of Practice focused on civic engagement as a vehicle to share best practice and make new links while strengthening existing relationships with civic organisations.
- The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama will diversify performance content to engage a wider range of audiences and develop a digital public programme to extend reach and access.
- We will work with University of Wales Trinity St David's to establish our Civic Action Scheme, supporting our students to engage with organisations impacted by the pandemic.
- RWCMD will deliver a lively community participation programme for all ages, focussing on working increasingly closely with community partnership networks.

**5.2 How will your strategic approach in this area align with HEFCW's [Research and Innovation: the Vision for Wales](#)? Select the pillars supported:**

- Excellence
- Place
- Innovation
- Collaboration

**5.3 How do your strategic ambitions for civic mission and public engagement support the Vision's goals, milestones and ambitions?**

[Max 250 words]

The University of South Wales is continuing to develop its Civic Engagement agenda by committing to the recommendations outlined in the HEFCW Civic Mission audit. We are also focussing on place and have begun to work with Public Service Boards (PSB) to ensure our civic activities are aligned with other organisations to ensure maximum impact for the communities the PSBs serve.

Collaboration is central to USW's proposed activities detailed in section 5, for example, USW's Wales Women in STEM: Collaborative Initiative develops links between HE, FE and industry to ensure a pipeline of skilled women can engage in STEM.

Our new Engagement Plan (currently being finalised) builds on the foundations achieved by achieving the targets in our current plan but has expanded to consider how our students can play a role in civic mission. This work has been accelerated by our strategic alliance with University Wales Trinity St David's who we are working with to pilot the Civic Action Scheme, enabling students to undertake volunteering opportunities with organisations initially, who have been badly impacted by the pandemic. The Scheme aims to support 200 students into volunteering positions.

Our Director of Research and Business Engagement and Civic Mission Officer are active members of the new Universities Wales Civic Mission Network, and share best practice through this forum.

## Section C: Alignment to policy and priorities

### 6. Wales and UK Policy

*Describe how your RWIF strategy aligns with relevant place based regional, Welsh, and UK policies such as e.g. local city region / regional growth deals; [WG's Prosperity for All: economic action plan](#); [UK Industrial Strategy](#); [Public Services Boards](#); [UPP Civic University Foundation](#); [Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy](#); [Science for Wales](#); [Regional Economic Frameworks](#) etc.*

[500 words max]

Our Innovation Strategy aligns with Welsh Government's ***Prosperity for All: economic action plan*** and ***Regional Economic Framework*** by supporting university–business collaboration and knowledge exchange to stimulate growth, increase productivity, and make Wales more competitive globally. It supports Welsh Government's focus on innovation, encouraging businesses to adapt and improve their productivity and sustainability through innovative solutions. Our knowledge exchange interventions will provide opportunities for businesses to realise their development ideas in a supportive environment and be confident in introducing new products and services to market, positively impacting on GDP and driving jobs growth.

The strategy aligns with the ***UK Industrial Strategy*** key pillars of ***Research, Innovation and Business Growth***, with productivity driven by the exchange of ideas and collaboration between HE and industry. Successful commercialisation requires close academic-industry links with clear mechanisms for partnering, and this drives our approach to business growth support, facilitated by our Exchange Hub. The Industrial Strategy pillars of ***Skills and National/regional growth*** are also key, with our HE/FE collaboration providing the opportunity to speak to industry with one voice, and lead on initiatives that support a strategic and collaborative approach to skills investment and delivery. Our close working with industry consortia is crucial to our skills provision, driven through industry engagement and partnership development.

The Knowledge Exchange and Innovation fund will support ***Science for Wales*** and Reid recommendations through the leverage of external funding from prestigious sources outside of Wales, based on research excellence. USW has expertise in the Grand Challenges identified within ***Science for Wales*** especially the Low carbon, energy and environment challenge. Our ***Sustainable Environment Research Centre (SERC)*** is a ground-breaking research centre which brings

together leaders from biology, engineering, chemistry, and physics in a single academic team, combining their resources and skills in order to address major energy and environmental R&D challenges and attracting funding from UK and International sources. Our *Centre for Automotive & Power Systems Engineering (CAPSE)* is a nationally recognised independent research, development, test and certification house, with a reputation for cutting edge research and knowledge transfer activities within the advanced automotive and power systems engineering sectors. Both centres will be key to delivery of our strategy.

Our Civic Engagement work aligns with the **UPP Civic University Foundation** through our revised Creating Connections Engagement Plan, which will lead on the notion of a “civic army”, ensuring our entire USW community is a part of our civic mission, critically including our student population. Our civic engagement work also directly addresses recommendations from Welsh Government’s “Talented Women for a Successful Wales” report. Our work also utilises the Universities Wales Civic Mission Framework which was launched in January 2021.

In enterprise and entrepreneurship, our strategy confirms our commitment to build upon the excellent work being achieved through the **Youth Entrepreneurship Programme**, aligned with the Welsh Government’s **Prosperity for All** programme of work, inclusive of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015), and Welsh Government’s Economy, Employability and Skills plans. It commits to driving forward enterprise and entrepreneurship skills development by playing a clear and significant role central to Welsh, UK and global economic growth and recovery.

## 7. Meeting the requirements of the UK Knowledge Exchange Concordat

*Institutions in Wales must demonstrate through their RWIF strategies commitment and alignment to the principles of the UK Knowledge Exchange Concordat. A development stage will take place during 2020-21 to implement a Welsh model.*

*For this initial stage we are asking institutions to confirm, through their strategies, that they are aware of the KEC principles which were outlined as part of the initial [consultation](#), and that they are committed to alignment through the Welsh model for engagement. Revised RWIF strategies can be submitted annually as part of the monitoring procedure, and this process will be utilised to demonstrate full KEC commitment following the development year.*

[500 words]

We are committed to the principles of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat, recognising the importance of alignment between our Innovation Strategy and the eight principles. We monitor our strategy against the principles and have consulted across the institution to carry out a self-evaluation exercise and agree priorities for urgent action.

**Mission:** Innovation is a key theme in the USW 2030 strategy, with clear institutional objectives for Innovation, led by the PVC Innovation. The areas of



Engagement and Enterprise/Entrepreneurship have dedicated management groups focussed on driving forward the two agendas and collaborating to ensure success and the sharing of best practice.

**Policies/Processes:** Clear processes are in place across the Innovation agenda – including in relation to commercialisation, continuing professional development, partnership/external engagement, quality assurance and legal documentation. Continuous improvement in process and policy documentation is ongoing to ensure that all stakeholders (internal and external) have clarity on operationalising Innovation activities.

**Engagement:** Our Engagement activity has a clear route through USW Exchange, providing a central service for triaging enquiries and facilitating access to academic expertise. The Innovation fund allows us to continue our commitment to resourcing significant business support and industry engagement activities through our Exchange team – providing clear processes for partnership management and celebrating collaborative successes.

**Working transparently and ethically:** We are committed to transparent and ethical working, with clear mechanisms for communicating legal/regulatory requirements to partners and stakeholders. We ensure the highest level of professionalism in our partnership management through centralised and supportive systems and resources, noting that continuous improvement is key.

**Capacity building:** We recognise the importance of developing staff and students to deliver KE activity successfully. We have a comprehensive calendar of events available to all staff with development opportunities which span research, innovation, engagement and civic and public engagement. All staff are mandated to attend a centralised induction where the support available to them to engage with Innovation/Knowledge Exchange activity is outlined. Our KE staff are well networked through Welsh HEI, University Alliance and Praxis Auril KE forums and CPD, and staff secondments into industry are encouraged.

**Recognition and rewards:** We recognise the achievement of staff and students who achieve impact in their KE activities, and we celebrate this success both internally and externally. Our USW Impact awards celebrate the success of our research and innovation and the impact these activities have in the real world. The awards highlight the value of these activities to early career staff and help them consider engaging externally to achieve transformational change. All academic staff can gain career progression to Associate Professor and Professor via one of four routes including Innovation and Engagement and Professional Practice, complementing the more established routes of Research and Development and Learning and Teaching

**Continuous improvement:** We share best practice internally, and through external networks such as industry consortia, Regional Skills Board, HE/FE networks, Welsh Gov/UK Gov, Unis Wales/HEFCW/UniAlliance, Industry bodies. Partner feedback is key to our commercialisation activity and business support services.

**Evaluating success:** We annually benchmark KE performance through HE-BCI data, and report against our Institutional Plans for Engagement, Research and Innovation, our wider 2030 Strategy KPIs.

## 8. Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015

*Provide specific information on the RWIF strategy will support the seven goals, and five ways of working in [the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015](#);*  
[250 words max]

As a public body, USW recognises the duty placed upon it by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 to help improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, and to consider the needs of people now and in the future.

Our Innovation strategy aligns with the goals of Prosperity, Resilience, Global Responsibility and Equality – notably through delivery of our Innovation and Knowledge Exchange fund, Exchange/Business Support and Collaborative activities, and our focus on Entrepreneurship. Through an innovative, productive academic community we will develop a skilled and well-educated population and will focus on knowledge exchange that generates wealth and provides opportunities. We will work with companies in key Welsh Government sectors and those most in need (including entrepreneurs and micro-businesses) to support growth in an efficient and sustainable way. We will provide support to allow companies and their employees to realise their full potential, no matter what their background or circumstance, and to enhance the University's reputation, income generation and positive impact on Wales.

Our civic mission and Women in STEM work will directly support A More Equal Wales and A Wales of Cohesive Communities, and our Journal for Civic Engagement will add to our Vibrant Culture. Through the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange fund we are actively supporting projects that respond to health implications in response to COVID19 to deliver a Healthier Wales. All Innovation activity will be overseen to ensure it supports the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

## 9. Impact on Welsh Language

*Outline the positive impact RWIF investment will have on opportunities to use and support the Welsh language. Where appropriate you may wish to refer to the themes in the [Cymraeg 2050](#) action plan.*  
[250 words max]

All activity will be overseen to ensure it impacts positively on the Welsh Language, and complies with Welsh Language Standards. In all our Innovation activities - across enterprise, economic development and business growth, civic mission and

commercialisation workstreams - we will consider our contribution to the three themes of the Cymraeg 2050 action plan:

Theme 1: Increasing the number of Welsh speakers

Theme 2: Increasing the use of Welsh

Theme 3: Creating favourable conditions – infrastructure and context

This will include consideration in relation to skills provision, use of Welsh in the workplace, services to Welsh speakers, and impact on Welsh communities.

Our strategy consists of a broad range of activities which will be monitored to ensure that they meet regulatory requirements. Where needed we will seek input from USW's Welsh Language Unit which is responsible for implementing the Welsh Language Standards identified in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measures 2011, and for monitoring compliance with them. It works closely with USW's Welsh for Adults Centre which provides Welsh language courses for staff from beginner to advanced level.

## **Section D: financial assurance**

### **10. Use of Research Wales Innovation Funding**

*How is your RWIF allocation 21/22 being used to deliver the strategy set out in Section B, and what are your anticipated priorities for the use of RWIF funds in future years? [250 words max – or append a table outlining broad investment areas]*

Indicative anticipated expenditure is shown below (revised for 21/22). For clarity, spend has been allocated against one of the three RWIF priority areas, but it should be noted that much of the funding will have impact across all three priority areas.

#### **2021/22 Funding Allocation**

##### **Commercialisation: £745,000**

- Knowledge Exchange & Innovation fund
- Commercialisation Fund
- Commercialisation Project Officer
- Innovation Contracts Officer
- CPD development
- Technical Facilities development

##### **Business Growth & Skills Support: £444,192**

- Engagement Manager x 2
- Exchange Officer
- Partnership & Engagement Programme
- HE/FE Workshops
- CPD tasters for business
- CPD Business Development
- Exchange events and marketing
- CRM support
- Incubator Resource
- Enterprise Employability Officer

- Alumni Graduate Entrepreneur resource

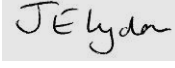
**Civic Mission & Public Engagement: £70,000**

- Civic Mission Officer
- Civic Mission events
- Impact Awards

**Section E:**

**Regulatory Requirements**

*NB: HEFCW may request further information / clarification on any of these areas*

i) <a href="#">Welsh Language Standards (2018)</a> <i>[Use the drop down menu]</i>	This strategy complies with Welsh Language Standards 2018
ii) Equality Impact Assessment <i>[Use the drop down menu]</i>	This strategy has been Equality Impact Screened
iii) <a href="#">Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)</a> <i>[Use the drop down menu]</i>	This strategy will contribute towards the aims of the WFG Act 2015
<b>Signature: Vice Chancellor</b>	
<b>Date</b>	25/06/2020