

**THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART**



**KNOWLEDGE
EXCHANGE AND
INNOVATION
FUND STRATEGY**

AY 2025-26 TO AY 2029-30

1) Institutional Context

GSA is a diverse community of 3,500 students and staff and 22,000 alumni working across the world. With our base in Glasgow and Highlands and Islands (H&I) campus, our work offers considerable opportunities for Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (KE&I) to make a difference. Our place-based, urban and rural approach brings together KE&I, research and teaching to maximise collaboration, income and impact.

Our staff, students and graduates play a significant role in Scotland's local economies and cultural infrastructure. In Glasgow, a high proportion of our graduates remain in the city to work in creative and other sectors, many as sole traders or founders of small businesses. GSA H&I students and staff contribute to the Moray economy and the wider innovation infrastructure of the region, aided by our strategic relationship with Highlands and Islands Enterprise. We are also developing our work with South of Scotland Enterprise and the Crichton Campus in Dumfries.

KEIF will allow us to become the creative partner of choice in KE&I for academia, industry, the third sector, cultural organisations, health bodies, local government and other agencies. Building on GSA's high-quality research and impact (and ambitions for REF), our KE&I will contribute to the application and uptake of new knowledge through collaboration, increasing the beneficial effects of creative people and practice on society.

We strive to be a global leader and partner for KE&I, by creating a collegiate culture that values everyone's contributions. We will prioritise the development of colleagues and communities of practice, to thrive and meet our ambitions together.

2) Overview of Strategic Ambitions

GSA's KEIF strategy defines how we will maximise the impact of our work from AY 2025-26, by enhancing engagement with businesses, communities and public services, developing our culture and infrastructure and supporting enterprise. We aim to secure increasing investment in KE&I and ensure that GSA contributes to Scotland's ambition to be one of the most innovative small nations.

Our strategy includes enhancements to our external engagement by providing a seamless, supportive experience for KE&I collaborators, including an improved digital 'front door' explaining how to collaborate with GSA, better systems for partner relationship management and more proactive promotion of opportunities through business development and outreach.

Enhanced external engagement will be enabled by the completion of our 'toolkit' to support KE&I, including updated policies and related materials on IP, consultancy and commercialisation, and revised monitoring, advisory and governance arrangements to oversee further development and annual operational implementation of this strategy.

We aim to elevate KE&I in our new career framework, ensuring recognition for staff engaged in impactful projects, and to develop a digital portfolio of KE&I case studies, which highlight impacts achieved and raise the profiles of staff involved. We will develop our culture, aligned with the KE Concordat, and champion an inclusive and fair approach.

We will revise our creative enterprise infrastructure, increasing entrepreneurial activity through: enhanced training and guidance for students, graduates, staff and some external parties; developing and piloting new incubation models and partnerships; and place-based initiatives to support creative sector businesses beyond GSA.

All of the initiatives outlined in this strategy are underpinned by KEIF-funded staff and infrastructure; without this essential, long-term investment, such transformational work would not be possible.

3.) Alignment to Scottish Government Priorities

The GSA's KEIF strategy strongly aligns with the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and Scotland's National Innovation Strategy by advancing entrepreneurial education, supporting green and digital transitions, and promoting inclusivity and community impact.

As part of NSET's Programme 1 (Entrepreneurial People and Culture), staff supported by KEIF, will establish GSA as an Entrepreneurial Campus that fosters a cross-disciplinary entrepreneurial mindset through tailored training. This will prepare students, staff and alumni to embed creative entrepreneurial skills across various sectors.

In line with Programme 2 (New Market Opportunities), we will leverage our H&I campus to champion craft-based entrepreneurship and support Scotland's green economy. This campus will serve as a hub for female-led enterprises, natural capital projects, and energy transition initiatives, addressing priorities in renewable energy and sustainable community development. This work aligns closely with Scotland's National Innovation Strategy's focus on green technologies. KEIF will allow us to develop these ambitions, while seeking additional funding to maximise the impact of this initiative.

Our collaborations with Scotland's Innovation Centres will help address Innovation Strategy themes in digital health and energy transition, extending GSA's founding role in the Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre (DHI) to new domains. By creating interdisciplinary collaborations, we will support public sector innovation and business productivity.

GSA's Future Skills team will grow our provision of Creative Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for Scotland's workforce to develop adaptable, future-oriented skills informed by creative approaches, aligning with Programme 4 (Skilled Workforce). For example, our current work with the Scottish Prison Service on Regenerative Leadership is helping them to develop a more resilient and innovative workforce to implement the institutional transformation they are undertaking. KE&I funding will facilitate core Future Skills staff to support colleagues throughout GSA to develop CPD courses from across the spectrum of our expertise.

4) Platform Grant

Glasgow School of Art is pleased to confirm our commitment to match-fund the KEIF Platform Grant during the period covered by this strategy, primarily through the in-kind contributions to strategic KE&I objectives by a range of staff as detailed in Section 5 below.

The Platform Grant will be invested mainly in a combination of centralised professional support services and infrastructure, provision of training and professional development for academic staff, participation in collaborative initiatives such as SHIFT and Converge, commissioning commercialisation and related support when required, and internal grant schemes to facilitate KE&I and impact (for reference, all of these investments represented around 70% of Platform Grant expenditure in 2024-25). Central support roles will continue to include personnel responsible for enabling academic staff to achieve research impact and engage productively in KE&I, and to increase external funding and investment in KE&I projects, leveraging KEIF-funded infrastructure to build our impact.

In addition, Platform Grant and Outcome Grant investment will part-fund a dedicated team involved in the development and delivery of a programme of strategic KE&I initiatives, as presented in this document.

5) Overall capacity for KE&I

GSA's current capacity to support KE&I is underpinned by targeted investment from KEIF. The initiatives we have set out are being actively developed and delivered by staff who are either fully or part funded with KEIF, and whose contributions are essential to achieving the scale and impact of innovation and engagement envisioned. GSA does not have access to alternative sources of investment in KE&I infrastructure, so without KEIF we would be unable to maintain the capacity to deliver this work, and the scale of our ambitions would be significantly reduced.

The equivalent of 4.8 full-time roles are currently directly supported through KEIF investment, including 2 central professional support roles in our Research Department (covering innovation funding and support for KE and impact), and part (2.8 FTE) of the specialist team (8 roles, 6FTE) that will be responsible during the period covered by the strategy for a combination of Future Skills CPD provision, the development and delivery of KE&I initiatives with industry and relevant aspects of (non-curriculum-focused) enterprise support. We will seek to maintain or grow this capacity relative to levels of demand.

Additionality is provided by those not funded through KEIF, including the remaining 3.2 FTE posts in the team responsible for Future Skills and other KE&I activities, and at least 5 other staff have a significant degree of responsibility for KEIF-related activities as part of their roles, either at a strategic, policy or managerial level (in the central Research Department, academic Schools and senior leadership team), or in terms of leading on the development and delivery of applied research initiatives involving non-academic partners, including a Senior Researcher for Knowledge Exchange in our School of Innovation and Technology and a Director of Emerging Technology. This does not include those GSA staff directly employed by the DHI innovation centre (7.3FTE, who have received significant support from KEIF-funded roles at each stage of its development) or aligned with Rural and Civic Lab research centres, academic members of staff who may be involved in specific KE&I projects from time to time, or colleagues working in aligned areas who undertake complementary work, such as those involved in careers, employability and professional opportunities for students, or in supporting creative SMEs through commercial services provided by our Centre for Advanced Textiles (CAT).

6) KE metric Activity

To date, GSA's KE Metrics performance has been strongest in relation to external grants and contracts to support applied research/KE&I, and our projections assume that this will continue to be a key emphasis of our KEIF activity, complementing core strengths, disciplinary expertise and the value we can offer to industrial and other external organisations. Based on track record, much of the emphasis of such work will be with government bodies, local authorities and health and hospital authorities, including our important roles with DHI and other Innovation Centres.

Similarly, a significant proportion of our KE&I work has been in the Consultancy category, which we aim to maintain — albeit that many of those projects have historically been facilitated by third party grants, and our objective is to increase the scope of work funded directly by the organisations with which we are working. As a KEIF action, we will also revise policies and guidance on undertaking academic consultancy, and review how we report it.

In terms of Outreach, our objective is to exceed recent performance by securing 4 KTP projects during the period covered by this KEIF strategy. We also seek to increase funding and secure it more consistently (with industry partners) through Enterprise Schemes such as those funded by Innovate UK, and to continue securing investment via UKRI follow-on funding schemes or equivalent (subject to availability) - with modest growth projected (aligned with underpinning research activity and GSA's existing strategic research targets, which have been approved by our Board).

CPD and licensing and commercialisation are two areas that have not been a major strategic focus in the recent past for GSA, but which we intend to develop through KEIF. Plans and capacity for CPD delivery are already established through our Future Skills team, and this will be a continued focus for growth over the course of our strategy. Given our disciplines and research, exploitation of IP is not planned as a major focus of our KEIF activity, but our aim is to complete the current development and implementation of better capacity, policies and resources so that we can provide effective support (to staff, graduates, students and partners) when opportunities arise, including potentially in partnership with other HEIs/organisations. Where students and graduates are concerned, our main focus will be on start-ups as in most cases GSA students at all levels retain ownership of their IP.

In these ways, we will seek to reverse recent trends and achieve growth in KE Metric categories over the period covered by this strategy. In addition to the standard reporting metrics, we shall (as a KEIF action) seek to develop additional institutional KPIs to capture staff start-ups (rather than spin-outs), and the cultural and social impacts of GSA's research, KE&I activities in fields such as fine art and curatorial practice, which are not fully reflected in reported data (see 8 below). We will also prototype a dynamic assessment framework to better measure, evaluate and communicate the impact of activity supported through the KEIF (see 15 below).

7) Graduate Start-Ups and Spin-Outs/Entrepreneurial Support

We are highly ambitious in our plans to make GSA an Entrepreneurial Campus. We believe this work can catalyse the creative potential of our staff, students and alumni and the wider creative industries to fuel the engine which drives Scotland to become one of the most innovative small nations in the world by 2033 (Scotland's National Innovation Strategy). We have set a modest goal to support the creation of a small number of staff-led start-ups or spin-outs (following a period in which this has not been a strong focus), while our work with graduates will concentrate mainly on start-ups rather than spin-outs, capitalising on our position that students own their intellectual property.

Central to this mission is the development of a distinct approach to entrepreneurship, underpinned by recent initiatives including the Rural Lab's Craft Scaler with South of Scotland Enterprise (SoSE), and our Future Skills program in Regenerative Leadership with the Scottish Prison Service.

Building on the successes of our SHIFT programme – a continuing partnership with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and QMU (see 9) – we plan to use KEIF to launch an entrepreneurial skills course informed by ethical values and our specialisms in creative practice and critical thinking; this will be available to staff, alumni and students on our Future Skills platform. We will seek to make these courses available to wider networks, assisting creative industries to apply their innovation skills more productively for the benefit of the Scottish economy.

KEIF will support us to design, develop, assess the feasibility of, and implement (and source supplementary funding for) physical and/or virtual incubator spaces, offering long-term access to business guidance, training and resources. We will endeavour to collaborate with other HEIs where interests and locations overlap, sharing resources for creatives to meet and collaborate with technical experts from other spheres e.g. we will develop collaborative initiatives with the Smart Things Accelerator Centre, which has close links to GSA's Product Design Engineering programme, and build closer links with initiatives such as Techscaler and CodeBase. By offering services to businesses (e.g. CPD, consultancy, live projects and KTPs) we will build relationships across commercial sectors. Bringing together the creative practice and user-centred design approaches of the GSA with technical expertise from businesses, Scotland's Innovation Centres and other HE institutions will generate product and business ideas to contribute to Scotland's Economic transformation.

We will use KEIF to explore the feasibility of creating a GSA umbrella company (or alternative model) to facilitate staff and graduate start-ups in a low-risk environment. Such an entity could help

businesses to pool resources, share expertise and attract funding to grow sustainably together. We hope such a structure could be available to other creatives and crafters to help small and micro business scale together. This entity would become a deep creative resource to be tapped by Scotland's wider business community, supporting symbiotic growth across the ecosystem.

KEIF will support us to transform GSA into a hub where students, alumni, and staff meet potential co-founders, work alongside experts in emerging technologies, and design sustainable products and businesses that address global challenges. We aspire to strengthen Scotland's economic landscape ensuring that our creative community contributes to shaping a dynamic future for Scotland and beyond.

8) Wider Societal Impact

Achieving societal benefits has been a strong driver for many of GSA's KE&I activities, including much of our income-generating work with partners in sectors such as healthcare and housing. Some of the positive impacts arising from our research and expertise, however, are not apparent from KE metrics data as they do not involve significant financial transfers. In many cases, this applies to the cultural impacts our researchers achieve by working with creative organisations and practitioners, but work of this kind remains central to GSA's mission as a specialist art and design institution. In this respect, our KEIF strategy complements GSA's Research Strategy – and REF ambitions – by seeking to develop fine-art- and design-based KE&I projects that align with research impact objectives, and to achieve more significant impact through a strategic approach to establishing sustained, formal partnerships with key creative sector partners. We will also work to develop better indicators for measuring how our work leads to social and cultural advancement (see also 6).

Similarly, the potential for our research to influence improvements to public policy relies on our capacity to engage with policymakers to raise awareness of the value of our work. We aim to strengthen our relationships with policy bodies, networks and alliances, particularly in Scotland, through the Scottish Parliament and Government, Local Authorities and organisations such as Enterprise Agencies, in fields such as support of the cultural and creative economies, urban design and the built environment, and use of design methods in the policy development process.

To facilitate such work, we will continue to provide an internal KE, innovation and impact fund, investing KEIF to enable academic staff to forge partnerships, develop networks, disseminate work to users of research (e.g. through policy briefings, reports, curation and consultation) and collaborate creatively. Training will also be provided to enhance staff capacity to engage with partners.

We shall also develop an enhanced and more structured approach to public engagement with research (online and in-person), through GSA-led outreach programmes and participation in external initiatives, informed by the principles of the Concordat for Public Engagement with Research.

9) Collaboration

As a small, specialist institution, GSA recognises that we are often able to achieve the greatest impact when working in collaboration with other academic and non-academic organisations and applying specialist expertise from our core disciplines to a range of contexts. KEIF will allow us to maintain and build on existing, long-term collaborations of this kind, while also seeking to expand the reach and range of our relationships with industrial and public partners, as appropriate to our strengths.

We will support the well-being economy by continuing our role as founder and core partner (with Host institution, University of Strathclyde) in the DHI innovation centre, and its continuing development as a

core element of Scotland's innovation infrastructure, including by working to secure additional investment to support its work. We will also seek to develop our relationship as a regular partner with BE-ST, building on a memorandum of understanding to supply expertise in design innovation, digital visualisation and environmental architecture to support industrial innovation in Scotland's built environment sector. Based on what we have learned from working with DHI and BE-ST, we will identify how we could add value to the work of Scotland's other innovation centres.

GSA welcomes the opportunities that KEIF provides for the sector to collaborate on supporting enterprise and innovation. In addition to seeking ongoing opportunities to collaborate with HE peers on specific KE projects, we will continue to invest our Platform Grant in our membership of Converge, to work closely with Interface to support innovation by Scottish SMEs and to work with West of Scotland KTP Centre to identify (and in due course implement) opportunities for knowledge transfer partnerships.

We will also (with KEIF investment) maintain our collaboration with Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Queen Margaret University and Creative Entrepreneurs Club on SHIFT (and/or successor programmes) to support creative graduate pre-starts and start-ups. In addition, we intend to form a working group with RCS, QMU, UHI and other smaller, less research-intensive HEIs to scope (and potentially implement) models of shared commercialisation support.

GSA has not to date been in a position to receive a UKRI Impact Acceleration Account (IAA), but we have contributed to the work of IAAs based at other HEIs, and in the forthcoming five years aim to identify opportunities to establish shared Accelerator initiatives in future funding rounds. That is one way in which we might seek to collaborate with other Glasgow HEIs on a place-based model, just as we have been pleased (last year and this) to work with University of Glasgow and RCS on the Creative Founders/Launch Fund. In addition, through the GSA H&I campus and Rural Lab research initiative, we are keen to identify opportunities to collaborate on KE&I with other rural-focused HEIs.

10) Regional Approaches

Regionally our focus is on Greater Glasgow and the Highlands and Islands, with an ambition to develop our impact in the south of Scotland. GSA plays a pivotal role in the creative ecology of Glasgow, not least through graduates who build careers in the city's creative and other sectors – many of them as sole traders or founders of SMEs. GSA actively contributes to discussions on regional economic growth, including through Glasgow Economic Leadership, the Innovation Action Plan for Glasgow City Region and the city's innovation districts. We will continue to collaborate on applied research and KE&I with other HEIs in Greater Glasgow (e.g. DHI, SHIFT, Creative Launch Fund) and with Glasgow City Council (e.g. Glasgow Urban Lab), with a renewed purpose and focus on urban development through our emerging Civic Lab.

For 15 years, GSA has pioneered design-led approaches to supporting public and private sector innovation, from our H&I campus near Forres. Working with regional agencies and HEIs, this will serve as a prototyping site for a number of our planned KEIF enhancements, including: expansion of CPD; collaborations with sectors such as space, food and drink and renewable energy; business incubation; and creating socially and geographically inclusive models of entrepreneurial support targeting groups such as start-ups led by women, craft enterprises and rural businesses.

In addition, we will further develop our growing relationship with Crichton Campus and South of Scotland Enterprise, building on our recent support of creative SMEs led by female entrepreneurs.

11) Embedding and Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

EDI is integral to our strategy, guided by the ambition to broaden engagement with diverse communities across students, staff, alumni, and business partnerships. Prioritising inclusivity by offering a welcoming 'single front door' for businesses, enhanced by outreach, will ensure their journey with us is accessible and surfaces the wide range of opportunities we can offer. This is particularly designed to reach underrepresented groups who might feel excluded in existing entrepreneurial settings but resonate with the inclusive and creative environment at GSA.

Democratising access to partner intelligence, we will design a relationship management system that breaks down information hierarchies and encourages participation. By fostering a transparent and collaborative approach, we aim to engage a wider spectrum of individuals in our initiatives.

By valuing KE&I on a par with research in our planned, new career framework, we will provide recognition for achievements in these areas, creating a pathway for career advancement based on diverse excellence markers, whether these be research outputs, commercial and/or other KE&I success. This structure will foster interdisciplinary collaboration and engagement across the institution and our partnerships.

Our approach emphasises creativity, craft mindset and sustainable practices, influenced by EDI leadership values and inclusive practices. By embedding this ethical and sustainable entrepreneurship model, we will encourage start-ups to align with regenerative principles and social responsibility, fostering inclusive support for founders who might feel excluded in conventional entrepreneurial spaces. Our resources and infrastructure to support creative entrepreneurship will forefront EDI and social ethics with transparency embedded across IP policy and engagement practices.

13) Promoting Positive KE&I Culture

We will build a strong and collegiate KE&I culture, ensuring that Professional Services staff have the skills and resources they need to support colleagues to identify and deliver KE&I activities. Initially, we will complete our ongoing periodic audit of KE activity across the institution to better understand current strengths and areas to develop. We will extend CRM systems to strengthen relationships with external partners from the public, third and business sectors (Indicator: no. new organisations engaged).

A renewed KE presence on GSA's website will establish a clear message about our KE offer. External organisations will be able to understand our expertise at a glance and identify a point of contact for enquiries (Indicator: no. enquiries received/managed).

We will provide training for staff around key aspects of KE&I, including IP and routes to commercialisation (indicator: no. staff taking part in internal/external training). Maintaining and expanding our internal KE&I and Impact fund will enable staff to engage with external organisations via placements/secondments, collaborative research and other activities (Indicator: projects supported).

We will create a supportive infrastructure in which colleagues feel the contributions they make are valued, through equitable career progression and redefined KE career pathways (Indicator: relevant aspects of career framework established).

14) Knowledge Exchange Concordat Principles

We are pleased to confirm our commitment to the eight guiding principles of the KE Concordat, and that actions towards achieving full alignment with the Concordat are embedded throughout this strategy.

15) Additional Information

As part of our commitment to embedding innovation across all aspects of KE and in alignment with the Scottish Government's national missions, GSA will prototype a dynamic assessment framework to better measure, evaluate and communicate the impact of activity supported through the KEIF. This initiative directly responds to the SFC's ambition to position Scotland as one of the most innovative small nations globally.

As part of our 'NEXA' research programme, which focuses on mapping and interpreting impact through qualitative assessment of outcomes, stories, and practice-based innovation, this approach will reflect the complexity and diversity of KE&I activity within a creative arts and design-led context, offering a nuanced means of capturing value beyond traditional metrics.

We aim to develop, test and refine this framework in collaboration with partners and stakeholders, with the intention of sharing a model that could be adapted and adopted more widely across the sector. In doing so, we will contribute to building a more dynamic and context-sensitive approach to impact assessment — one that reflects the real-world social, cultural and economic value of KE&I activity.

This work underscores our belief that innovation in measurement is essential to sustaining and strengthening innovation in practice. It represents a key opportunity to demonstrate how qualitative insights can sit alongside quantitative indicators to support a more holistic understanding of KE&I outcomes.

Annex B: GSA KEIF Strategy Metrics Data Objectives (2025)

Type of Income	Source	Weighting	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Outreach	SFC KE Metric Return	5	0	-3,424	0	0
Enterprise Schemes	SFC KE Metric Return	4.5	634	123	0	0
Consultancy	SFC KE Metric Return	3	184,754	353,361	427,192	382,429
CPD	SFC KE Metric Return	2	0	0	0	0
Research	SFC KE Metric Return	2.75	1,370,430	691,240	989,868	934,000
Licensing	SFC KE Metric Return	1.5	0	0	0	0
Translation	SFC KE Metric Return	1.5	28,928	73,293	68,280	6,494
Venturing	SFC KE Metric Return	1.5	0	0	0	0
Total			1,584,746	1,114,593	1,485,340	1,322,923

		Number of				
Spin-outs still active and survived 3 years	HEBCI		0	0	0	0
Graduate start-ups still active and survived 3 years	HEBCI		0	0	0	6

Additional institutional KPIs						
KPI1	EDI profile of staff and students undertaking KE, Innovation and Enterprise projects to match institutional academic staff/student profiles					
KPI2	Indicators of KE&I social and cultural impact.					
KPI3	Staff Start-Ups Created		0	0	0	0

24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
0	42,500	85,000	85,000	85,000
10,000	20,000	30,000	40,000	50,000
348,000	350,000	360,000	370,000	400,000
40,000	42,000	44,000	46,000	48,500
957,000	985,000	995,000	1,100,000	1,150,000
0	0	10,000	15,000	20,000
50,000	25,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
0	0	10,000	15,000	20,000
1,405,000	1,464,500	1,584,000	1,721,000	1,823,500

Number of				
0	0	0	1	2
6	7	9	12	15

Baseline and data collection process to be established during KEIF implementation				
Baseline and data collection process to be established during KEIF implementation				
0	1	1	2	2



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

As a public sector organisation, GSA has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to assess the impact all of its new or revised policies, practices, procedures or projects may have on protected groups (as defined by the Act).

The purpose of this assessment is to use relevant evidence and critical thinking to identify any impact (positive, negative or neutral) the policy, practice, procedure or project that is being assessed may have on the people it affects or is intended for.

The EqIA is a tool which helps mainstream equality into everything GSA does. It requires us to consider how we can mitigate or eliminate negative impact and, in turn, advance positive outcomes. Therefore, it must be undertaken during the development / review of the policy, practice, procedure or project it refers to and not after it has been finalised. Ideally, EqIAs should be a team effort of relevant parties to ensure a variety of perspectives have been consulted. All finalised EqIAs must be signed off by an executive lead and either the Head of Student Support and Development or GSA's Equality Officer, however, support from the Equality Officer is available at any stage of completion.

Further guidance on how to complete an EqIA can be found on GSA's website and the Equality and Diversity section on the staff intranet. If you have any additional questions, please contact equality@gsa.ac.uk.

Name of Equality Impact Assessment (E.g. Area of decision making/title of	KEIF Strategy AY 2025-2026 – AY 2029-2030
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policy, procedure, programme or relevant practice)	
New or reviewed	New
Owner/Review Lead and role	Ruth Cochrane, Future Skills Programme Manager
Department or School	School of Innovation & Technology
Date of assessment	December 2024

1. Purpose of policy / practice / procedure / project being assessed – brief description

This EqIA applies to the Knowledge Exchange & Innovation Fund (KEIF) Strategy AY 2025-2026 to AY 2029-2030.

The KEIF strategy outlines our collaborative and holistic approach to knowledge exchange and innovation for AY 2025-2026 – AY 2029-2030. Our place-based, urban and rural approach brings together KE&I, research and teaching to maximise collaboration, income and impact. Our strategy is to become the creative partner of choice in KE&I for academia, industry, the third sector, cultural organisations, health bodies, local government and other agencies. Building on GSA's high-quality research and impact (and ambitions for REF), our KE&I will contribute to the application and uptake of new knowledge through collaboration, increasing the beneficial effects of creative people and practice on society. EDI is integral to our strategy, guided by the ambition to broaden engagement with diverse communities across students, staff, alumni, and business partnerships. Section E, Part 11 of the KEIF Strategy relates to *Embedding and Promoting EDI*, as an SFC requirement, and this EqIA must also be submitted to SFC. Our approach emphasises creativity, craft mindset, and sustainable practices, influenced by EDI leadership values and inclusive practices. Our resources and infrastructure to support creative entrepreneurship will forefront EDI and social ethics with transparency embedded across IP policy and engagement practices.

2. Evidence used when undertaking this assessment – this can comprise of internal and external reports, survey data, etc

- GSA's Strategic Plan (2022–2027) emphasising EDI, sustainability, and partnerships.
- GSA Research Strategy highlighting strong, inclusive research communities, SDG alignment and public engagement.
- National frameworks: Scotland's National Innovation Strategy, including a focus on inclusivity and green/digital transitions, and the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET), including emphasis on entrepreneurial and equitable economic opportunities, explicitly addressing NSET's Programme 1 (Entrepreneurial People and Culture) and Programme 2 (New Market Opportunities).
- The formation of GSA's Future Skills and tailored Creative Professional Development (CPD) proactively addresses Programme 4 (Skilled Workforce).
- Internal GSA policies: People Strategy supporting diverse workforce development and ethical leadership, Equality and Diversity materials (Staff Intranet)
- GSA Code of Good Conduct in Research
- REF 2021 Equalities report for GSA submission/research community

3. Type of impact by protected characteristic – please provide details of the potential impact (could be more than just one type); make reference to relevant evidence (from the list you provided above) where applicable

blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Measures relevant to all protected characteristics and other specified groups	We believe this work can accessibly catalyse the creative potential of all our staff, students and alumni to help fuel the engine which drives Scotland to become one of the most innovative small nations in the world by 2033 (Scotland's National Innovation Strategy). Our work with graduates will mainly focus on start-ups rather than spinouts, capitalising on our position that students own their intellectual property. Our strategy aligns with NSET and Scotland's National Innovation Strategy strongly and is underpinned by firm EDI principles as laid out in GSA staff policies. Staff contributing to work aligned to the KEIF strategy must comply with GSA practices to promote equality. As a KEIF action, and with guidance from Equality and Diversity team, we will develop KEIF EDI monitoring metrics, to inform reporting, ensure that equality related objectives are being met and highlight any mitigating actions required. Research-related activities will be governed by the Code of Good Conduct in Research and Research Integrity policies and GSA Research Ethics policies. Where allegations of misconduct concern any EDI issues, those undertaking an investigation must have experience in dealing with such matters. Those managing or undertaking an investigation must have received training in the avoidance of bias. Relevant institutional policies stipulate that GSA must consider how to support the health and wellbeing of all parties involved in such procedures.	No negative impacts identified.	Aligns with anti-discrimination policies and inclusivity values

blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Age	Encourages intergenerational collaboration and lifelong learning through creative professional development (CPD). Staff profile of those submitted to REF 2021 (not an exact match with anticipated staff cohort participating in KEIF activities, but closest comparable data set currently available) skewed older than GSA academic staff profile, suggesting that older employees did not face significant barriers to participation;	Younger age groups were slightly underrepresented in REF compared to all GSA academic staff. Subsequent initiatives, including research mentoring, training and access to research grants and leave are addressing opportunities for early career researchers. We will ensure that KEIF initiatives take a similar approach, including through KEIF objectives to provide equitable career progression for those participating in Knowledge Exchange.	No neutral impacts identified
blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Disability	Policies for accessibility in workshops and resources ensure equitable participation. In relevant GSA staff and student policies and procedures, a participant with a disability may be accompanied if they require assistance, and reasonable adjustments will be made to enable them to participate.	A very similar proportion of staff with a declared disability were submitted to REF 2021 as were represented in the staff population as a whole, suggesting that involvement in research at GSA is broadly inclusive of people with this protected characteristic. By extension, we anticipate this will also apply to participation in KEIF initiatives, too. However, available data on this characteristic could be enhanced, and we aim to develop annual monitoring data (with guidance from the Equality and Diversity team) to enable annual KEIF EDI monitoring, and identification of any actions to address issues identified, and related case studies. Accessibility of policy and other KEIF-related documents and materials to those using assistive technologies has not yet been tested; accessible versions will be created once policies approved/initiatives implemented.	No neutral impacts identified

blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Gender reassignment (covers Trans identities)	Inclusivity in leadership and research initiatives fosters engagement with transgender individuals.	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified
blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership	As for ‘measures relevant to all protected characteristics’ above.	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified
blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Pregnancy and Maternity	Strategy actively promotes flexible working practices to create opportunities for entrepreneurial activity in forms to fit many different working patterns.	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified
blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Race	Strategy emphasises engaging underrepresented groups and communities	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified
blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Religion or Belief	As for ‘measures relevant to all protected characteristics’ above.	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified
blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Sex	Proactive support for women in leadership and entrepreneurship through GSA’s People Strategy. Feminist leadership strategy actively encouraged through resources and workshops.	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified

blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Sexual orientation	Promotes safe spaces and inclusivity in creative environments.	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified
blank cell	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact
Impact on other groups (e.g. Care Experienced; Carers; Military Veterans; Low Socioeconomic Status (SES); Asylum Seekers; British Sign Language Users, etc)	As for 'measures relevant to all protected characteristics' above; in addition: In relevant GSA staff and student policies and procedures, participants who are not fluent in English may be accompanied by someone to assist with communication.	No negative impacts identified.	No neutral impacts identified
4. How has the identified negative impact been mitigated? – please provide details of undertaken actions broken down by protected characteristic			
Potential negative impact relating to accessible versions of policy documents has not yet been mitigated – please see 5 below. Improved EDI monitoring for KEIF-related activities not yet developed and implemented.			
5. Any outstanding mitigation (where applicable) – please provide a concise action plan with action owner and a timescale for completion			
Action	Equality Impact	Person Responsible	Time frame

Accessible versions of KEIF strategy and other KEIF-related materials and associated guidance and resources will be created once approved, to ensure compatibility for users of assistive technologies.	Will ensure that people with a visual impairment are not prevented from accessing the KEIF strategy or associated documents.	Colin Kirkpatrick (strategy/policy documents) Project Lead, prior to implementation (specific KEIF projects and initiatives)	Within 2 months of policy approval by SFC, or on request if required sooner
Develop KEIF-related EDI monitoring data.	Will improve understanding of how inclusive and pro-active KEIF activities are in relation to EDI, help to highlight any issues and inform approach to any required mitigating actions.	Leads on KEIF workstreams, reporting to relevant committees.	Fully implemented for AY 2025-26.
Ensure KEIF-related activities encourage participation by and the development of diverse range of participants, including earlier career academic staff.	Support the career development, through KE and innovation, of academic staff in a way that advances equality of opportunity and advances good relations between groups by designing initiatives in a way that pro-actively encourages diverse engagement – building on recent good practice in research support area.	Leads on relevant KEIF workstreams, reporting to relevant committees.	Embedded within initiatives as they are developed and implemented.

6. How does the outcome of this assessment and the actions undertaken support GSA's [2021 - 2025 Equality Outcomes](#)

EO 1: Actively foster and support an organisational culture in which dignity and respect for self and others is understood and practiced, where confidence is encouraged and promoted, and where ignorance, prejudice and bias is challenged.

The Knowledge Exchange Innovation Fund (KEIF) strategy AY 2025-2026 – 2029-2030 is aligned to Scotland's national innovation strategy and as such has the ambition of an inclusive and economically prosperous Scotland which fosters creativity and enterprise. Staff working on KEIF activity such as consultancy, creative professional development, knowledge exchange, and business engagement, are required to adhere to all GSA staff policies which embrace equality diversity and inclusion, and where applicable to comply with research ethics and integrity policies and procedures, which require a sophisticated understanding of potential impacts on participants and others engaging with our work. Our creative entrepreneurship skills development programme will be available to all staff, students, and alumni of GSA and we will ensure that no accessibility barriers or prejudices prevent individuals from participating (including for online provision). We will champion female led small businesses on our H&I creative campus and contribute to knowledge exchange in areas such as craft scaling to support flexible working opportunities particularly in a rural context, an approach which proactively seeks to address some forms of inequality.

EO2: Continue to evaluate our physical and digital environment, aiming to optimise accessibility and inclusivity by acknowledging and providing for the needs of our students, staff and stakeholders.

KEIF strategy and supporting documentation/guidance and training materials will be provided in accessible formats. KEIF-related and/or funded activities will be required to comply with relevant GSA policies and guidance, such as the Digital Inclusion Policy.

EO5: Develop a comprehensive and robust equality and diversity data set which enables us to inform action, assess progress and measure impact

All relevant equality-related data (where available) will be captured via our planned Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and student records (with regard to external collaborators, graduate businesses etc.). We will also collate detailed case studies which map our impact in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion, to be considered as part of annual reporting to SFC on progress towards KEIF strategy objectives. In the associated KEIF Metric data spreadsheet (which influences core KEIF grant allocations), we have proposed an additional institutional KPI that the demographic profile of GSA beneficiaries of KEIF related schemes will match or be more inclusive than the overall demographic profile of GSA academic staff and students.

7. How does the outcome of this assessment and the actions undertaken support the three main duties GSA has under the Equality Act 2010 [Equality Act 2010](#) to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;**
- advance equality of opportunity;**
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?**

GSA staff policies (e.g. Dignity and Respect at Work and Study Policy) include explicit provisions requiring staff to take steps to prevent harassment, discrimination and victimisation in the workplace.

The standards defined in the integrity policies should contribute to an inclusive culture which encourages equality of opportunity, including for those who currently have less influence or power, and in which the needs of those with protected characteristics are more consciously and carefully considered, fostering good relations between all those involved.

8. Where/when will action progress and outcome be reported and reviewed?

Oversight and governance of progress towards KEIF strategy objectives will be provided by Research Committee, reporting to Academic Council. Reports on aspects of KEIF which are relevant to or aligned with provision for students and graduates will be provided to Education Committee, reporting to Academic Council. Senior Leadership Group will provide oversight of annual KEIF reporting to Scottish Funding Council, and to aspects of regular GSA Strategic Plan progress monitoring which relate to KEIF, and to related annual HESA reporting. In all relevant cases, such reporting will include explicit consideration of EDI, as a component element of KEIF plans and objectives.

Next review date – please consider any outstanding actions outlined above; the review period must be in line with the policy/service review and/or at intervals of no more than three years	AY2028- 2029, or at the point of any significant revisions to strategy if earlier.
Signed off by Owner/Review Lead (name and role) Ruth Cochrane, Future Skills Programme Manager	19.12.24
Signed off by Executive Lead (name and role) Prof. Irene McAra-McWilliam, Deputy Director Research & Innovation	27/01/25
Signed off by Equality Lead Equality Officer, Ceit Mackintosh	30/01/2025