

KEF2 Options survey 2022

1. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, your feedback is very important to us.

This survey is primarily aimed at KEF participating institutions, or individuals within those institutions, however responses from anyone engaged with, or interested in the development of the KEF are welcome.

By participating institution, we mean any institution who was eligible to participate in the first iteration of the KEF and was included in the KEF Cluster group placement. This includes institutions that chose not to submit narrative statement.

The responses to this survey will be analysed by Research England, and will inform the final decisions for the second iteration of the KEF to be published in summer 2022.

Supporting information

In this survey we have set out proposals for various changes for the next iteration of the KEF, all of which are based on feedback presented in detail in the KEF review report.

For the questions in the 'Methodology' section of this survey, the questions relate to relatively complex scenarios around how we calculate the metrics and deciles. We have therefore prepared a supporting information document which sets out the detailed information on the rationale for changing the underlying methodology and the proposals put forward, including worked examples of how the proposed changes may impact the results for some exemplar providers.

While all submissions should be made using the online KEF Options Survey, a PDF reference copy of the questions is available alongside the survey supporting information document on the Research England website.

You will be able to return and make edits to your submitted survey (from the same computer) up until the survey closure date.

We will publish an analysis of the survey responses as part of the KEF2 decisions report in summer 2022 ahead of the publication of KEF2 and may include anonymised individual responses to the survey in the summary. However, it should be noted that all responses may be disclosed on request, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

The deadline for responses to the KEF options survey is midday on **Thursday 28 April 2022**. Please direct any queries to Sacha Ayres, Senior Policy Adviser, Knowledge Exchange at KEF@re.ukri.org.

Survey structure

We have structured this survey in the following sections, if you are replying to provide your personal opinion (i.e. not a formal institutional response) please skip any sections or questions that do not relate to your experience, or if you have no opinion.

1. Introduction
2. Respondent details
3. Methodology
4. Changes to underlying metrics
5. Perspective title changes
6. Dashboard design
7. Narrative statements

Reference copy of the KEF options survey questions
This reference copy of the KEF options survey has been provided to support advance consideration of the questions. Please use the online survey located at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KEFOptions2022> to submit your responses.

If you would like a copy of this reference document in MS Word format, please email KEF@re.ukri.org

2. Respondent details

* 1. Respondent details

In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

- As a formal response on behalf of a participating institution
- As an individual working in a participating institution
- Representative body of participating institutions
- Other (please specify)

2. What is the name of your organisation?

(optional)

* 3. Which cluster has your institution been placed in?

- Arts cluster
- Cluster E
- Cluster J
- Cluster M
- STEM cluster
- Cluster V
- Cluster X
- Not applicable (i.e. you don't work at a participating institution)

3. Methodology

Through the following questions we will seek your views on the underlying statistical methodology used to calculate the KEF metrics and deciles.

The issues with the current methodology and the details of the alternative proposals, including worked examples are provided through the [supporting information](#) document. Further detail is also given in section 6 – Metrics and methodology of the [KEF review report](#).

4. Perspective level calculation methodology

We are proposing to change the underlying methodology for the KEF perspective calculations to remove the need for scaling by presenting perspective level results that relate to a provider's relative performance compared to other participating providers, rather than absolute metric values.

Please refer to the [supporting information](#) document for detailed information and worked examples of the proposed alternative methodology.

Are you in agreement with RE making the proposed methodology change for KEF2?

- No change** - continue with the same scaling and deciling methodology used for KEF1 in 2021.
- Yes, make proposed change** - Use the proposed alternative methodology for KEF2.

5. Proposal to move to five quintile levels

We are proposing to move from presenting results as ten 'decile' levels to five 'quintile' levels of involvement. There is also an alternative option to move to four 'quartile' levels of involvement. Please refer to the [supporting information](#) document for detailed comparison of the different options.

Please rank from the following options where 1 = most preferred and 3 = least preferred

☰

No change - retain ten deciles (options 1 or 2)

☰

Proposed change - use five 'quintile' levels of involvement (options 3 or 4)

☰

Alternative option for change - use four 'quartile' levels (options 5 or 6)

6. Perspective level labelling options

We are also proposing to change the nomenclature used to label results from 'top/bottom X%' to 'involvement levels'. These involvement levels could either be labelled with qualitative descriptions to indicate a provider's higher or lower level of involvement, or with numerical labels where '1' represents the lowest level of involvement. We are proposing to use qualitative descriptions as set out in table 2, option 3 of the supporting information document.

Please state your preference for labelling perspective level outcomes.

- Words** - use words to label the levels of involvement (Research England's proposed outcome)
- Numbers** - use numbers only to indicate whether an involvement level is high or low

7. Are there any other comments you wish to make in relation to the above Methodology proposals?

Reference Only

4. Changes to underlying metrics

The following questions relate to specific proposals to make changes to four of the underlying metrics for KEF2.

Reference only

8. IP & commercialisation - background information to questions 9 & 10

The current numerators and denominators used in relation to the spin-out metrics in the IP & commercialisation perspective are as follows:

Metric	Numerator	Denominator
Estimated turnover of all active firms per active spin-out	Estimated current turnover of all active firms	Number of active spin-outs which have survived at least three years
Average external investment per formal spin-out	Estimated external investment received	Number of newly registered companies

It was proposed in the KEF review that using alternative denominators for the current spin-out metrics could reflect a more accurate picture of a provider's spin-out activity, or provide greater alignment with the definitions used in HE-BCI for the following reasons:

Turnover of spin-outs

The current denominator in this metric allows for normalisation based on a more robust and appropriate indicator of the volume of a provider's spin-out activity, by measuring spin-outs of greater maturity and therefore more likely to be generating turnover (and so begins to account for this time lag between formation and turnover generation).

However, the denominator in this metric could be amended to the 'number of active firms' to align with the HE-BCI guidance for the numerator, 'Estimated current turnover of all active firms'. This metric would instead be calculating the mean average turnover of all active spin-outs reported to HE-BCI, including those which have the potential to generate turnover in the future but do not currently and so their impact is potentially yet to be captured. Another alternative denominator is HEI research income which would align with other KEF metrics and normalise for the size of the provider.

Investment in spinouts

There is also often a time lag between the registration of a spin-out and when it begins to attract significant external investment, and so normalising this metric by the number of newly registered companies may not be most appropriate. In addition, this value can fluctuate significantly between reporting periods and therefore not accurately reflect a provider's broader spin-out activity.

Similar to the possible denominators described above for spin-out turnover, this denominator could be amended to the 'number of active firms' to align with the HE-BCI guidance for reporting external investment; the number of active spin-outs which have survived at least three years' to normalise for the volume of spin-out activity likely to be generating impact; or total HEI research income to normalise for the size of the provider.

We are proposing that the denominators for the two spin-out should be the same, and the 'number of active spin-outs which have survived at least three years' is most appropriate as it normalises performance based on a more robust measure of the overall volume of a provider's spin-out activity. In addition, the 'number of newly registered companies' and 'number of active spin-outs' can fluctuate significantly between reporting periods, and as result may not be as robust when calculating metric values.

9. IP & commercialisation - turnover of spinouts

On the basis that we will continue to have both a turnover and an external investment spin-out metric in this perspective, please rank the proposed denominators for the spin out turnover metric by preference. Where 1 = your most preferred option and 3 = your least preferred option.

Numerator - Estimated current turnover of all active firms

☰

No change – use 'number of active spin-outs which have survived at least three years' as denominator (Research England's proposed action)

☰

Change option 1 – use 'number of active firms' as denominator

☰

Change option 2 – use 'HEI research income (Total research grants and contracts)' as denominator

10. IP & commercialisation - investment in spinouts

On the basis that we will continue to have both a turnover and an external investment spin-out metric in this perspective, please rank the proposed denominators for the investment in spin-outs metric by preference. Where 1 = your most preferred option and 4 = your least preferred option.

Numerator - Estimated external investment received

☰

No change – use 'Number of newly registered companies' as denominator

☰

Change option 1 - use 'Number of active spin-outs which have survived at least three years' as denominator (Research England's proposed action)

☰

Change option 2 – use 'Number of active firms' as denominator

☰

Change option 3 – use 'HEI research income (Total research grants and contracts)' as denominator

11. Skills, enterprise & entrepreneurship - background information for question 12

The current metrics included in the Skills, enterprise & entrepreneurship perspective are as follows:

Metric	Numerator	Denominator
CPD/CE income normalised by HEI income	Income from CPD/CE	HEI income
CPD/CE learner days delivered normalised by HEI income	Number of CPD/CE learner days	HEI income
Graduate start-ups rate by student FTE	Number of graduate start-ups	Student FTE

The feedback in the KEF review highlighted concerns that the CPD/CE learner days metric is not sufficiently robust due to the following:

- the data is difficult to collect
- there are gaps in the data as historically HE-BCI has only required this data to be reported 'where they are available'
- the definitions in HE-BCI are not sufficiently clear to ensure consistent reporting across the sector

There were also concerns expressed that the use of two metrics compared to only one relating to graduate start-ups placed undue emphasis on CPD/CE activities.

We are proposing to remove the CPD/CE learner days metric, with no replacement, leaving the perspective with two metrics.

12. Skills, enterprise & entrepreneurship – CPD learner days

Please select your preferred metrics for the Skill, enterprise & entrepreneurship perspective from the following options:

- No change** - Continue to use all three metrics in the perspective
- Remove CPD/CE learner days** – remove the metric, leaving only CPD/CE income and graduate start up metrics in the perspective
- Other (please specify)

13. Research Partnerships - background information for question 14

Please refer to section 5 – Findings by perspective, Research partnerships (page 34 onwards) of the [KEF review report](#) for further background to this topic.

The current metrics included in the Research partnerships perspective are as follows:

Metric	Numerator	Denominator
Contribution to collaborative research (Cash) as proportion of public funding	Collaborative contribution (cash) to publicly funded research	Public funding for collaborative research
Co-authorship with non-academic partners as a proportion of total outputs	Number of outputs co-authored by a non-academic partner	Total number of outputs

We are working with Elsevier, who provided data on co-authorship with non-academic partners, to evolve this metric including the types of outputs used in the dataset. This metric currently includes articles, conference papers, books, book chapters, and reviews. We consider that the inclusion of trade journals is the only viable addition at this time and we would like your opinion on whether this should be included.

From analysis of the current KEF data, it is **not** anticipated that the inclusion of trade journals will result in a notable change to overall metric results, rather it presents the opportunity to include all appropriate output types in this metric where possible.

14. Research partnerships – Co-authorship metric

Please select your preferred outputs for inclusion in the Co-authorship with non-academic partners as a proportion of total outputs:

- No change** - retain metric based on current list of output types co-authored with a non-academic partner
- Include Trade journals** - add trade journals to the output types used to capture co-authorship with a non-academic partner
- Other (please specify)

15. Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to the above proposals to change the underlying metrics?

5. Perspective title changes

The following questions all relate to the titles of the perspectives.

We received feedback through the KEF review that the titles of several of the perspectives implied a wider range of activity than that represented by the metrics used. In the absence of wider metrics being currently available, it is proposed that we amend the perspective titles to more accurately represent the metrics contained within them.

16. Title change - IP & commercialisation

The metrics for the IP & commercialisation perspective are as follows:

- Estimated turnover of all active firms per active spinout
- Average external investment per formal spinout
- Licensing and other IP income as proportion of research income

Feedback from the KEF review indicated that the current title implied metrics that were more closely aligned to a **broader exploitation of IP** than those actually used.

Please select the title that you consider should be used in the next iteration of the KEF for this perspective.

- No change** - IP & commercialisation
- New title** - Research commercialisation
- Other (please specify)

17. Title change - Working with business

The metrics for the Working with business perspective are as follows:

- Innovate UK income (KTP & grant)
- Contract research income with non-SME
- Contract research income SME
- Consultancy and facilities income with non-SME
- Consultancy and facilities income with SME

Feedback from the KEF review indicated that the current title implied the use of metrics that represented a **greater range of non-monetised activity**, than the income driven metrics actually used. We propose to change the title to clarify that this perspective is related to research and development services provided to business only.

Please rank the following title options by order of preference to be in the next iteration of the KEF for this perspective. Where 1 = your most preferred option and 3 = your least preferred option.



No change - Working with business



Change option 1 - Research and development for business



Change option 2 - Business Services

Reference Only

18. Title change - Working with the public & third sector

The metrics for the Working with the public & third sector perspective are as follows:

- Contract research income with the public and third sector
- Consultancy and facilities income with the public and third sector

Feedback from the KEF review indicated that the current title implied the use of metrics that represented a **greater range of non-monetised activity**, than the income driven metrics actually used. We propose to change the title to clarify that this perspective is related to research and development services provided to the public and third sector.

Please select the title that you consider should be used in the next iteration of the KEF for this perspective.

- No change** - Working with the public & third sector
- New title** - Research and development for the public & third
- sector Other (please specify)

Reference only

19. Title change - Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship

The current metrics for the Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship perspective are as follows:

- CPD/CE income normalised by HEI income
- CPD/CE learner days delivered normalised by HEI income
- Graduate start-ups rate by student FTE

Feedback from the KEF review indicated that the current title implied the use of metrics that represented a **greater range of activity**, than the metrics actually used. We propose to change the title to clarify that this perspective is related to the education activities that underpin entrepreneurship, or make explicit reference to the limited metrics used.

Please rank the following title options by order of preference to be in the next iteration of the KEF for this perspective. Where 1 = your most preferred option and 3 = your least preferred option.



No change - Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship



Change option 1 - Provision of CPD and graduate start-ups



Change option 2 - Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship education

20. Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to the above proposals to amend the KEF perspective titles?

6. Dashboard design

Through the following questions, we would like your feedback on the future direction of the KEF dashboard design, noting that they will not be implemented for KEF2.

In Annex A of the [KEF review report](#), we have presented example images of a new 'tiled' approach to present the KEF dashboard.

21. Dashboard design - polar area chart

Should the KEF dashboard continue to present the provider outcomes through the polar area chart of an individual provider's results, or should we explore moving to a simpler non-graphical (e.g. 'tiled') representation at a provider level (as illustrated in figure 40 of the [KEF review report](#))?

- No change** - continue with a provider level polar area chart
- Change** - explore moving to a simpler non-graphical method, for example a 'tiled view' of providers and perspective 'tiles' to show provider performance relative to their cluster
- Other (please specify)

Reference only

22. Use of perspective level score

Should the KEF continue to present a single high level perspective level result, or should it be the 'lens' through which we present a range of metrics?

Please rank your preferences from the following options, where 1 = your most preferred option and 4 = your least preferred option.

☰

No change - continue with a single high level perspective level result (that enables users to also view the constituent metrics)

☰

Change option 1 - Remove the single perspective result, however continue to present the constituent metrics in the 'perspective' groups.

☰

Change option 2 - Remove the single perspective result, and allow users to freely group metrics in any way they wish.

☰

Change option 3 - Remove the single perspective result, and allow users to choose between seeing metrics presented in the perspective groups or displays in their own group selections.

23. Are there any other comments you wish to make in relation to the KEF Dashboard design?

7. Narrative statements

Through the following questions we are seeking your feedback on proposals that relate to the frequency of narrative statements.

For the detailed background to these proposals, please refer to the [KEF review report](#), particularly section 5 – findings by perspective.

NB: The following questions on narrative statements are intended to gather feedback for future development, they will not be implemented for KEF2.

Background

Feedback gathered through the KEF review indicated that an annual re-submission of the self-assessment score and associated narratives was considered too burdensome. It was also considered to be unnecessary given the long-term nature of both public and community engagement and local growth and regeneration activities. It was proposed that every two or three years would be more appropriate.

We would like your feedback on the frequency and alignment of the submissions for the narrative statements and self-assessment score.

24. Frequency of Public & community engagement narrative submission

On the basis that the quantitative data underpinning the KEF metrics will be updated annually, how often should self-assessment scores and associated narrative statements be substantively updated?

- Annual** - alongside the annual updates of the quantitative data
- Every two years** - every other time that the quantitative data is updated
- Every three years** - every third year that the quantitative data is updated
- Other (please specify)

25. Frequency of Local growth and regeneration (LG&R) narrative submission

On the basis that the quantitative data underpinning KEF metrics will be updated on an annual basis, how often should the LG&R narrative statements be substantively updated?

- Annual** - alongside the annual updates of the quantitative data
- Every two years** - every other time that the quantitative data is updated
- Every three years** - every third year that the quantitative data is updated
- Other** (please specify)

26. Alignment of narrative submissions

On the assumption that quantitative data underpinning the KEF metrics will be updated annually, but narratives will be updated every 2 or three years, should the updates for all three narrative statements (institutional context, P&CE and LG&R) be aligned so they are all updated on the same frequency and in the same year? Alternatively, should they alternate and/or should the institutional context be updated more frequently?

- Together** – all three narrative statements should be updated on the same frequency and timescale
- Mostly together** – The P&CE and LG&R narrative statements should be updated on the same frequency and timescale, but providers should have the opportunity to make substantive updates to the institutional context every year
- Alternating** – The P&CE and LG&R narrative statement updates should be made on alternating years, with the opportunity to make substantive updates to the institutional context alongside either
- Other** (please specify)

27. Are there any other comments you wish to make in relation to the frequency or alignment of the narrative statements?