



Ufi Theory of Change

2020-2025 | Catalysts for a better future



VocTech
Trust

www.ufi.co.uk

A photograph of two men in a workshop setting, focused on working on a car engine. One man is holding a smartphone, possibly checking a diagnostic tool or a manual. The engine is complex, with various hoses, wires, and mechanical parts visible. The background shows a typical industrial workshop environment with a high ceiling and some equipment.

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Catalysts for a better future

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We are Ufi, the VocTech Trust

We champion the power of technology to improve skills for work and deliver better outcomes for all.

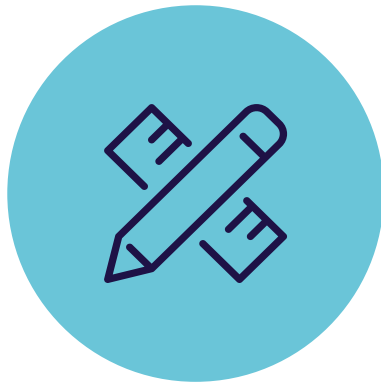
We act as a funding partner and essential friend to innovators in skills development, looking to help people progress in the workplace.

We catalyse a fundamental shift in how individuals, employers and UK society view, embrace and benefit from vocational skills development through digital innovation.

The beliefs that shape the way we think



We believe that every individual and employer can benefit from the acquisition of new skills, so that everyone has the opportunity to progress, to know the satisfaction of a job well done and to positively contribute to a better future for us all.



We believe in a very different approach to developing skills for work, where digital vocational technology (VocTech) is an enabler for a more flexible, engaging learning experience and for delivering improved learning outcomes.



We believe that through harnessing the best in digital technologies, the UK will develop a world-class vocational education system which will be the foundation of a thriving economy.



We believe that through supporting better learning for work in all sectors the opportunities for personal, business and societal growth are immense.



We believe we have a particular role in supporting sectors, locations, skills levels and individuals that have not been well served by the mainstream.

Culture - at heart, who are we?

We are a solution focussed organisation with an ambitious vision, and we care deeply about the people we impact.

We have a shared belief in the power of education to change lives, that life-long learning has a transformative role to play in all our lives and that vocational skills are the foundation of a thriving economy.

We are pragmatic and practical, and choose to support only those projects which we believe will really make a difference. Having made that choice we give our all to helping them take their idea to the next level. Their success is our success and we are proud of everything they achieve.

We are open minded and flexible over how that success is defined. We understand that with innovation and progress there comes risk, but we can learn from everything we do. Huge learnings can be gained from failure and when those learnings can drive us to create something new and not previously thought of failure is not something to be scared of.

We operate virtually and leanly, preferring to put all our energies and resources into our projects and into realising our vision, rather than into costly office spaces and material resources. We see technology as the ultimate levelling enabler, and if we believe it can change the working lives of people everywhere, we must believe it can facilitate everything we need too.



How do we see our world in the future?

For society at large

Increased productivity and performance at both individual and organisational levels aggregates up to a better performance for UK plc as a whole.

When improvements in the economy coincide with efforts to reduce levels of inequality rather than allow them to increase, then a better-performing economy correlates directly with a happier society. Investment in all individuals to give them opportunities to perform becomes an economic and societal imperative, and the spiral begins to turn upwards.

The UK that Ufi want to shape is one where this is a reality.

Where natural market forces drive better vocational training for, and in all corners of, industry and enterprise.

Where digital tools give easy access to high quality training for every job role, sector and community.

Where the needs of the individual, business and society are perfectly aligned with access to the widest range of digital learning tools that enable us all to thrive and prosper at work, and be ready to meet the challenges of the future economy.

Theory of Change Logic Model

There are four fundamental pillars that underpin our theory of change – the levers that we can pull to create lasting behavioural and cultural shifts that create a better future for all.

Our strong, independent voice and flexible funding mean that we can bring expertise, insight and resources to tackle the challenges we have described in this document.

Long term goals

Making Change Now

To support a portfolio of projects that deliver positive change for learners across a wide range of sectors, job roles, geographies and access points. These will demonstrate the positive opportunity that VocTech represents, delivered at scale, as well as having immediate impact on the lives of large numbers of individuals, education providers and employers. Our grant programmes will:

- offer a balanced risk profile, enabling us to support ground breaking ideas as well as demonstrate technology impact.
- enable us to extend our reach into communities currently under-served by existing learning opportunities.
- encourage organisations and consortia without a track record in VocTech to launch their ideas through our unique, flexible enrichment and project management approaches.
- reflect good practice in project design – designing the right thing to meet real user needs as well as designing it to a high standard.

Supporting the Market

To equip vocational education and training professionals (VET) with the skills and confidence that they need to adopt 'digital first' into their practice so that they can themselves spread best practice in VocTech pedagogies and better support vocational learners. We will do this by:

- investing in and commissioning projects that offer professional development across all aspects of digital supported learning.
- transferring innovative practice from other ed-tech sectors (in particular secondary and higher education) so that vocational learners can also benefit from those new approaches.
- maintaining a community of practice so that developers, trainers and all working in the adult education community can develop the confidence to utilise the most appropriate tech to support teaching and training.
- celebrating the positive impact of VocTech and sharing evidence of impact.

Change for a Better Future

To support a portfolio of investments that develop innovative tech for the future, seeding the market with new ideas. We want a better future for vocational skills – this means we need an education system that uses the most innovative tools and encourages the development of the best tech for adult vocational skills. Ufi ventures will:

- create a balanced portfolio of investments in early stage VocTech companies as a social investment and on terms that give them the best chance of success.
- develop a robust market intelligence programme to research and analyse investment activity in VocTech so that we can better understand how we can support market growth.
- build a co-investor network to connect individuals and organisations actively investing in VocTech across all sectors and technologies.
- maintain a market-facing approach to new investments, offering different ways of supporting companies, according to their growth needs.

Building the VocTech Community

To use our influence to catalyse change by reaching out to others who can multiply our investments and achieve real change at scale.

We have a role to play in bringing together the developers, learning providers, learning and HR professionals, sector experts and learning designers to enable adult vocational skills focussed tech development and implementation.

We can do this through the way we communicate, the events we run, and the way we support our project portfolio, including by:

- engaging with influencers and in vocational education to amplify our voice and engage in policy change, to support the acquisition of skills for work using digital technologies.
- building a community of interest to research and quantify the positive changes that VocTech investments, both in the public and private sectors, can make to individual business productivity and to UK GVA collectively.

Theory of Change Logic Model

From the four pillars of our long term goals, we can focus on strategies and actions in the medium and short term that will bring us closer to meeting our goals. As the world we live in is fast changing with new technology emerging all the time, we need to be flexible in our responses and update these regularly.

Medium term strategy	<p>To offer a diversity of funding opportunities that enable organisations from a variety of backgrounds to engage with Ufi:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use our flexible funding and project management to ensure that all those we fund have the best chance of success. • Our funding will encourage excellent design practice ensuring a clear focus on discovering real user needs. 	<p>To build Ufi Ventures as a market leader in VocTech investment, encouraging others to enter the market. We will invest in ventures where they are:</p> <p>Ufi mission aligned • User & market led • High impact potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong commercial potential • Credible plan • Great team • Co-investors • Responsible businesses <p>Alongside this, we will continue to develop our market intelligence capabilities and our network of co-investors.</p>
Short term actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual grant funding opportunities for projects to seed the market and demonstrate that we can make change happen with our VocTech Impact projects. • Support early stage applicants with our VocTech Ignite funding and enrichment to build capacity in their organisations. • Engage with the market to determine how our Specialist Calls can address particular sectoral challenges or serve disadvantaged communities. • Support all our projects with a flexible, can-do approach to project management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in a portfolio of 20 VocTech companies over four years. • Invest £10m into this portfolio over c6 years. • Provide engaged expert support to portfolio companies so they have the best chance of success . • Leverage a further £30m of third-party investment into the portfolio from an active network of co-investors. • Produce quarterly market intelligence bulletins that engage entrepreneurs, co-investors, and the wider market to see the potential of VocTech investing.

<p>Medium term strategy</p>	<p>To build our portfolio of projects and initiatives aimed at VET professionals with the aim of creating a critical mass of practitioners who understand the benefits of adopting VocTech as part of their skill-base.</p> <p>The opportunities offered will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible in their delivery to allow maximum accessibility. • Sustainable in the long term so that they become a reliable source of CPD. • Inclusive and collaborative to encourage peer-to-peer learning and innovation. • Responsive to the fast changing technological landscape. 	<p>To build a communications strategy to showcase the achievements of Ufi funded projects and investments alongside the very best of VocTech in the UK and internationally. We will align our messaging with other like-minded organisations to champion the message of better, quicker, digital.</p> <p>We will host showcase events and workshops to clearly explain our messages and ideas with a wide range of audiences (see next section) and will participate in events and activities hosted by others to share our stories.</p> <p>Through our evaluation programme, we will build a bank of qualitative and quantitative data on the use of VocTech to inform our own strategy and influence policy nationally on skills-for-work learning.</p>
<p>Short term actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop high quality CPD learning opportunities for VET professionals against targeted skills gaps in the public and private sectors. • To build a community of practice that shares expertise and cascades ideas across the sector. • To create a learning exchange where content, information on digital technology, and sharing of ideas is easy to access, up-to-date and relevant to real-world teaching practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of a five year strategy and annual delivery plans that link all of our activity to the implementation of our Theory of Change. • Annual VocTech Showcase event to give a platform to our excellent projects. • Support for podcasts and other media that take our message to a broader audience. • Engagement with new partners in developing our Specialist Call and understanding the messaging needed to reach new communities. • Dynamic updating of the website to include information on our projects to inspire others. • Clear communication of funding and investment opportunities to maximise the number of well-matched applications.

Our audiences

Our primary focus is the potential grant or investment recipients themselves. Our goal is that everything we do and every £ that Ufi spends has a positive impact, so our focus is on attracting people to work with us to help us demonstrate the power of VocTech.

Ideas come from many sources: tech developers and VET practitioners, public and private sector, charities and colleges. The concept may start off as a technology idea or have its roots in the needs of a community of learners. Many are a combination of both. But everything we support will be focused on solving a real-world problem in vocational education and training.

All of the actions in our four pillars are directed towards building and meeting the needs of this VocTech community.

Another critical audience for Ufi are all those organisations who play an active influencing role in the VocTech marketplace. If we want to maximise the pull effect that they can have then we must consider their needs too when building our offer. This audience includes VocTech users, the business community, the education and training community, policy makers and the media.



Evaluation and Measurement

As many of the changes we are seeking to catalyse have complex social and political dimensions, it will be a challenge to identify exactly how Ufi's grants and investments have contributed to the wider economic impact on UK GVA that we believe can happen as a result of a better-skilled workforce. We are not a research organisation and think we are better placed to directly help the market to develop rather than engage in detailed survey work or statistical analysis. As such, we have identified an initial set of proxy measures that would indicate that change is happening in the way that we would like to see which we will build over this five year period.

We have commissioned an evaluation of our past programmes and will build a new framework for future evaluation, based on the goals and principles in this Theory of Change. Each of our delivery plans will have KPIs for the actions planned for the year. Where we can measure change in numbers, we will collect that data. And we will work with national bodies that regularly survey the market to identify baseline data against which we can measure change in some of the statements below. We hope in this way to build a picture of hard data and compelling stories that will inform our future strategy.

Acknowledging our Wider Impact

We are also looking carefully at how Ufi's own funds are invested. Our goal is to invest a portion of the core fund directly into projects that will have a social impact and will also generate a financial return in future years. By doing this we can join a growing movement of organisations who believe that commercial investors do not need to trade-off between financial returns and social impact. We can use our money to make positive change happen, as well as safeguarding the funds for the future.



Summary tablet

Long term goals	Making Change Now <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain a portfolio of funded projects that both seed the market with new ideas and demonstrate the ability of VocTech to achieve impact at scale 	Change for a Better Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To catalyse the growth of the VocTech market by acting as a direct investor into companies 	Supporting the Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To equip vocational education and training professionals (VET) with the skills and confidence that they need to adopt 'digital first' 	Building the VocTech Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate the benefits of using digital technologies to enable and support vocational learning
Medium term goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer a diversity of funding opportunities that enable organisations from a variety of backgrounds to engage with Ufi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build VocTech Ventures as a market leader in social investment, encouraging others to enter the market too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop high quality CPD learning opportunities for VET professionals against targeted skills gaps in the public and private sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build a communications strategy to showcase the achievements of Ufi funded projects and investments
Short term actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VocTech Seed Calls VocTech Impact Calls VocTech Ignite support Flexible project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New investments Support for investment portfolio Market intelligence published Co-investment leveraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VocTech Essentials launched Networking for VET professionals Community of learning developed Engagement through social platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Showcase Case studies developed Funding call events Dynamic website content Coherent suite of strategy documents
KPIs	£ in grant funding # projects supported # learners supported # new technologies at prototype # businesses engaged # new applicants	# and £ investments completed # co-investors in network # ratio of co-investment to Ufi investment # market intelligence publications # market intelligence audience % of portfolio performing on plan % return on investment	# of courses developed # of learners # of new learners # of VET professionals reporting using VocTech in new way	# of new engagements on social media # use of VocTech in the media # new partners inviting Ufi to speak # case studies developed



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