

## **Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration**

The UK Government has asked Richard Lambert, the former editor of the Financial Times, to examine how the long-term links between business and British universities can be strengthened to the benefit of the UK's economy. The review was announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Pre-Budget Report in November 2002.

The review team will consult widely with business, universities and national and regional administrations in the UK and overseas. It will focus on how business can best exploit the technologies and skills that are being developed in the UK university sector.

The **business-university collaboration review** will:

- Identify the benefits to business of greater interaction with higher education, how this can be promoted and how any barriers holding back business demand for universities' knowledge and skills outputs can be addressed.
- Examine the national, regional and local economic impacts of business-university interactions, including how Regional Development Agencies and Sector Skills Councils can best support such interactions.
- Assess the lessons to be learned from business-university interaction across a range of countries and from best practice across the UK.
- Analyse how business employers can better communicate their skills requirements to a responsive university sector, and how they can improve the attractiveness of career paths to graduates and postgraduates, especially in technology; and
- Examine the effectiveness of measures such as the R&D tax credits on business demand for research and skills.

In addition, the UK Government White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education*<sup>1</sup>, announced that the review would ask business for its views on the present governance, management and leadership arrangements of higher education institutions, and their effectiveness in supporting good research and knowledge transfer and providing relevant skills for the economy.

The review team will seek to identify best practice and examples of excellence in business-university collaboration both in the UK and around the world and will explore potential barriers to progress. The review will also consider how business can attract the best graduates and postgraduates with the skills that it requires and whether universities' current financial and managerial arrangements help or hinder the extent of business-university collaboration.

We would very much appreciate views from business, universities and other national and regional institutions on the following issues by Thursday April 17<sup>th</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Future of Higher Education, Department for Education and Skills, published 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2003

## **Questions for Consultation**

1) We would like to identify international examples of best practice and excellence in business-university collaboration. Some examples of the types of collaboration that we would be interested in hearing about include:

- Industry's use of the information contained in academic publications, and academia's use of industry patents and prototypes or vice versa.
- Joint ventures between universities and business, for example, personnel exchange or collaborative research and development projects.
- Informal contacts, for example, meetings and conferences, use of science parks, business-university liaison, industry sponsored university posts or studentships, work experience for students, business contributions to curriculum development, academic secondments in industry and provision of continuing professional development training by universities for business.
- Formal contracts, for example, the use of licensing, research contracts, consulting projects, establishment of spinout companies, product testing, or business support.

*JM regularly uses the scientific literature and uses the standard search procedures and engines for this work. We would be not without the ability to search the academic literature.*

*There are few examples of personnel exchange but one does exist in the company at present. The academic spends up to 6 months a year in the company and this has brought real benefits in terms of technology transfer and education of our staff. Unfortunately it is a rare example.*

*We do sponsor some university posts and also have a very large programme of studentships and post-doctorates. We encourage all of our students to spent a period of time each year in the company. University projects are reviewed about three times a year and each project has a company project supervisor. Each year we organise a student seminar which, although private to the company, is probably the largest catalysis meeting held in the UK.*

2) We would also like to understand the main barriers faced across a range of countries to starting or strengthening such relationships. These might include:

- Management and organisational issues. How can businesses and universities best organise themselves in order to benefit from each other's resources? What mechanisms for priority setting, decision-making and funding in the university sector help business-university collaboration?

*At a basic level we really like industrial CASE Awards. They allow us to choose projects which are relevant to our business but which nevertheless involve basic research. We usually use them to provide us with the underpinning science for a key business area or to provide us with a basic insight into a new area of science and technology. We consider it vital to appoint an industrial project supervisor and to have regular project reviews. We do not expect patents from such work (they are an unexpected bonus). We also fund post-doctorate work, where we expect to be able to*

*set more demanding and shorter term targets. We are prepared to pay the going rate for these but also expect ownership of the IPR.*

- Technology transfer. What are the barriers? How can it be made more effective?

*Government departments appear to have the view that technology can be transferred from academe to industry and is ready to use in products. This is rarely the case and considerably more development is usually required, often involving the combination of several technologies. The key issue is often the funding of a demonstrator project, which industry sometimes finds difficult and which the DTI gave up doing several years ago.*

*Another issue is that industry clearly knows about the projects that it is funding (I hope!!) but it is often difficult to find out about what else is going on out there. Many of the databases in this area are now somewhat out of date (eg. BEST). The RSC has run a number of technology 'Car Boot Sales' and these have proved quite successful.*

- Intellectual property. Are the national and international arrangements understood and appropriate?

*This area is a minefield and is the subject of more argument with universities than anything else. There are some universities that we will not work with because of their attitude to IPR. Recent decisions by, eg. the Research Councils, to make universities responsible for IPR generated, eg. in CASE Awards, is very dangerous. Industry regards IPR protection as its bread and butter, whereas most universities have little experience. There are a lot of poor patents being written by universities which result in wasted IPR.*

3) A third set of questions relates to how business can attract the best graduates and postgraduates with the skills that they require, especially in technology. Questions for business and agencies outside the UK include:

- How do businesses, individually or collectively, communicate their needs for specific scientific or technical skills and for the development of relevant courses in their local universities?

*We are not particularly good at this. Universities never ask us what we want and we rarely volunteer the information. Information like this is often gathered by trade bodies like the CIA and is transmitted 'en masse'. We are of course able to communicate on an informal basis with the academics that we fund.*

- How are attractive career paths for science and technology graduates and postgraduates currently developed in your country?

*I would like to say that they are very attractive! We offer career paths not only in science but people are able to move readily into other career paths such as sales, marketing or manufacturing. People who show good management potential are 'fast-tracked'. In the UK,*

*scientific salaries are still generally too low and many scientists move straight into more lucrative occupations, eg in the City, rather than coming into science based industry.*

- Does business communicate its needs for skilled graduates and postgraduates to their local universities? If not, what more could be done to facilitate such a dialogue?

*See comments above*

4) The review team will also want to understand what lessons can be drawn from financial considerations in a range of countries that help or hinder the relationships between business and universities. Questions include:

- Are there ways in which the financing arrangements in your country are particularly effective at promoting business-university collaboration?

*I have already mentioned CASE Awards. Schemes such as LINK and the Innovative Manufacturing Initiative have also been very successful and we have used them extensively. The important thing is not to make the schemes too bureaucratic (this is the downside of many European programmes)*

- If R&D tax credits have been introduced, have they influenced business demand for research and skills? If so, how? Are there other means to the same end?

*Too early to say at present*

The review team welcomes written submissions by e-mail to [lambert.review@hm-treasury.gov.uk](mailto:lambert.review@hm-treasury.gov.uk) or by post to The Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ, UK by 17<sup>th</sup> April 2003. **Unless submissions are specifically marked as confidential, they may be posted on the review website** at [www.lambertreview.org.uk](http://www.lambertreview.org.uk) (from mid February.) Please include the name and contact numbers of the person to contact for any follow-up discussions.

### **Lambert Review Project Timeline**

The project timeline below outlines the proposed phases of the project. We anticipate that we will be in close touch with business, university and other key stakeholders during the main research phase from now until Easter, and again during the summer, when we will want to test our emerging findings and develop the final recommendations. The final report will be submitted to the UK Government in Autumn 2003.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timing - 2003</b>
1. Research and Consultation	Consultation with business, universities and regional and national administrations.	Now until Easter <u>Deadline for submissions</u>

		<u>17 April 2003</u>
2. Analysis & Emerging Findings	Analysis of consultation responses and web publish short <u>emerging findings paper</u>	Easter to late June/July
3. Re-consultation and development of final recommendations	Re-consult key stakeholders to test emerging findings and develop recommendations.	July/August/September
4. Submission of Final Report to the Government	Submit <u>final report</u> to the Government (HM Treasury, DTI and DFES)	September/October 2003