

BTC/AT/CCO

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Mr R Lambert  
Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration  
1 Horse Guards Road  
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Dear Mr Lambert

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

Thank you for your letter concerning this important review.

We understand that you will be receiving responses from a wide range of organisations and industries, and therefore believe it would be helpful to give a perspective unique to Boots, that of our involvement with University Schools of Pharmacy.

Therefore, our responses to your particular areas of consultation are:

#### 1. Current areas of collaboration

- We have close collaboration with all 16 Schools of Pharmacy.
- We recruit vacation students (around 1000 each year) and pre-registration students (around 350 each year), working closely with the Schools on appropriate timing, career fairs and recruitment processes.
- We have initiated and funded Chairs of Pharmacy at a number of Schools at various times over many years. We are currently supporting the appointed Boots Special Professor of Pharmacy and Business Ethics at Nottingham University.
- With the Schools of Pharmacy we have initiated and funded Teacher Practitioners. These 'TPs' contribute to the university with a teaching workload for 3 days a week and for 2 days a week work for Boots as practising pharmacists. (We have a similar arrangement with our optometrists.)
- This arrangement enables us to have a close working relationship with the Schools of Pharmacies, to share work on curriculum matters, foster good relationships with students and contribute actively to the Schools.
- The close working relationship with 'TPs' and the Schools of Pharmacy has helped us to convey skills requirements to the universities; however the Royal Pharmaceutical Society has by far the dominant role in this respect in ensuring clinical standards are set and taught.
- We have found few barriers to these particular approaches - and equally no encouragement from the RDAs or Sector Skills Councils.

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### Barriers/strengthening of relationships

- At present arrangements such as Boots pursues above with the Schools of Pharmacy, are completely funded by ourselves.  
The perception of university funding arrangements is that what business wants, it must pay for - however, this effectively creates limits to further development.
- There appears to be little incentive for university to provide services to industry or for technology transfer to industry.
- The apparent emphasis on the requirement to attract research funding, also means, we understand, the emphasis on teaching is reduced, which gives concern with regard to ensuring the continuing quality of students and graduates.
- There also appears to be no particular incentive or mechanisms to create potentially valuable movement or exchanges of staff between industry and universities (unlike the USA, where for example, professors sit on company boards, and company representatives on university panels).

### 2. Attracting Graduates

Boots is the largest recruiter of pharmacy graduates, both pre-registration (where we train the graduates for a year, post-academically, to enable them to register as pharmacists) and as newly qualified pharmacists.

While there remains a shortage of experienced pharmacists in the UK, generally we are able to recruit sufficient numbers of new graduates of the right calibre, due to the close relationships developed with the Schools of Pharmacy.

Overall, we have, we believe, developed good levels of collaboration with universities in the area of pharmacy, our core business.

However, the full potential of this collaboration is limited we believe by some of the fundamental financial and structural issues that underpin university funding arrangements.

I hope this response is helpful to the work being conducted by your review team, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Anne Toler**  
Head of Talent Management - Professional Services