

Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration

Written submission from the British Library, 17 April 2003

The British Library welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Lambert Review. It looks forward to hearing the review team's findings and recommendations.

Introduction

Successful relationships between business and higher education can be a source of innovation, specialist skills, world-class research and development and increased productivity.

The British Library is well placed to foster relationships between business and universities to the benefit of the UK's economy.

The Library is an integral component of the national research infrastructure and plays a significant role in ensuring the research excellence of the UK.

50% of the Library's £13.5m annual acquisitions purchasing budget is dedicated to developing its science, technology and medical collections, including patents. The Library is a major supplier of information to over 90% of the UK's top R&D Scoreboard companies (as defined by the DTI) and it underpins research in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK. Further, 75% of all new registrations for the Library's commercial services are from small and medium-sized companies (SMEs).

In addition, the Library's arts and humanities collections have significant potential to support creativity and innovation in the creative and media industries and we are consulting existing and potential users in HEIs and business over how we might better serve these sectors. The collection, which spans 3,000 years' of world culture, includes historical texts and images, an online picture library, sound archives and a comprehensive newspaper collection.

In the future, the extension of legal deposit and progress with e-licensing agreements will provide users with unparalleled access to e-resources.

Questions for Consultation

- 1. Best practice and examples of excellence in business-university collaboration in the UK and abroad**
 - Industry's use of the information contained in academic publications, and academia's use of industry patents and prototypes or vice versa**

The recently published Government strategy for science, engineering and technology highlighted the importance of the British Library in supporting scientific research and SMEs in the UK.

The British Library has an important role to play in supporting scientific research in the UK, by providing access to its scientific reading rooms, and through its document supply service. In 2001, the Library provided over one million scientific, technology, medicine and engineering documents to higher education institutions and industry in the UK. In addition, five million scientific journals, monographs and patents are consulted each year in the reading rooms. The Library estimates that the opportunity cost saving to universities of its provision is £50m per year. **It has potential to provide particular benefit to smaller firms which are less able than large companies to hold substantial collections of scientific journals and other publications.** The Library is facing pressures from increases in publishing output (running at 10 per cent per year) and from inflation in the cost of publications (around 7 per cent per year). It is also considering how best to meet increasing requests for information to be supplied electronically and has identified priorities for digitisation to focus on the most useful and relevant parts of its collection. The Library is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and receives an annual grant of around £86 million. It also receives around £28 million per year from provision of services, largely the document supply service, which charges at cost for its standard service, but offers value added services such as express delivery for a premium charge. The work of the library is also of relevance to the work of both DfES and DTI/OST; HEFCE and the Library launched a strategic alliance in March 2002. **Recognising the value placed on the British Library as a resource to scientific researchers in the UK, both public and private, the Government will be reviewing the Library's resource plans for the coming years.** This should allow the Library, among other things, to step up the level of digitisation of its collection, enabling more researchers to have quicker access to its collection, and to search the Library's databases more effectively.

Source: Investing in Innovation: A strategy for science, engineering and technology, July 2002 (DTI, HM Treasury & DfES).

The Library provides free access in its reading rooms to the largest collection of science, technology and business information in the world, supported by information and research staff. Over 3 million items are consulted every year.

The remote document supply service supplies nearly 4 million requests a year. In the UK a quarter of these requests are from industry, many of which are published papers from academia. Over half of all requests are from the academic sector for research papers and book loans.

The British Library is used by all UK universities; we estimate that the opportunity cost saving to UK HEIs from their use of the Library's services is in the order of £30 - 50 million per annum.

The Library also holds a comprehensive patent collection containing over 40 million patents from around the world, which can be consulted in the reading rooms or ordered from our document supply service. The patent collection is supported by a patent and intellectual property information service and regular free patent searching workshops. Approximately one-fifth of patent enquiries are from the HE sector.

The Library is working with The Patent Office on a review of the intellectual property services provided by major public libraries in the UK, known as the Patent Information Network (PIN) Libraries. The PIN Libraries are recognised as providing a non-threatening starting point for entrepreneurs, giving free advice on intellectual property for academics and the public alike, and directing people to other sources of business, financial or intellectual property advice. Many of these PIN libraries (e.g.

Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds) have close links with the technology transfer or innovation centres of local universities, directing people to these centres; they also provide free “patent clinics”, usually with patent agents.

- **Joint Ventures between universities and business, for example, personnel exchange or collaborative research and development projects**

There is synergy between the Government’s wish to forge stronger links between universities and business and the Library's strategic aims to support innovation, competitiveness and growth in the UK economy. The Library plans to deliver this by being a trusted, first choice provider of content, through navigation and research services and through local library/virtual networks.

There is enormous potential for the Library to work with the new Knowledge Exchanges, proposed in the “Future of Higher Education White Paper, January 2003”, to ensure that business and academic users are able to obtain access to the content and information sources they require.

The Library recognises the importance of the regional dimension, and hence the need to forge links to business through the regional development agencies (RDAs). It is focusing on building its own relationships at regional level through its plans to develop an Innovation Centre to support business and enterprise at its flagship building at St Pancras.

With the support of Lord Sainsbury and the London Development Agency (LDA), the Library has formed a joint working party with the London Business School (LBS) and University College London (UCL) to explore how we can collaborate on the delivery of the London Innovation Centre, described by the LDA as "a flagship enterprise that showcases innovation and acts as a reaction chamber for London’s innovation assets and enterprise”.

The British Library is in a unique position to collaborate on the delivery of the Innovation Centre, for the following reasons:

- the depth and quality of the Library's collections and the expertise of its staff would enable it to act as the "knowledge hub", providing unparalleled access to information and expertise, in both the sciences and arts/humanities to support SMEs and entrepreneurs from first idea to successful commercialisation;
- the British Library is familiar with, and has close links to, similar successful models in the Library sector, for example the New York Public Library’s Science, Industry and Business Library;
- the British Library has a track record of supporting successful innovators and entrepreneurs such as James Dyson (cyclonic vacuum cleaner), Trevor Bayliss (wind up radio), and Mark Sheahan (Simply Squeeze to Open containers);

- the Library's flagship building, located in the middle of three main railway stations in the burgeoning Kings Cross area, is well-positioned to support companies and entrepreneurs from a broad geographical area (for example, 45% of UK SMEs are within 1 ½ hours' travel of St Pancras);
- the Library has excellent networks with the academic community and business institutions, such as the CBI; and thus
- it is recognised by all partners that working with the Library would provide a low risk option, since it would involve working within an existing well-established infrastructure.

The Library is currently working with the LDA, LBS and UCL to determine how the existing facilities in its St Pancras building - including conference facilities, seminar rooms and a restaurant and coffee shop - can best be exploited. The potential for refitting some of our Reading Rooms and internal office space to accommodate other facilities, such as "hot-desking", is also being investigated.

Once established, the London Innovation Centre will be available as an exemplar for the other regions. As the UK's national library, the British Library is keen to extend its role as the "knowledge hub" and to engage in partnerships with the other RDAs in similar initiatives.

2. Main barriers to strengthening relationships

• Intellectual Property

At present, HEIs are prevented by their licences from allowing use of their electronic resources by commercial users for commercial purposes. Under impending new UK copyright legislation it will be necessary to charge copyright fees for all copying for commercial purposes.

The Library already has strong and heavily used services to business. It understands the complex issues of copyright and rights management in the dissemination of published research materials for commercial purposes, and has the mechanisms in place for the systematic recording of use and payment of copyright fees to rights holders. The Library therefore has the expertise, necessary content licenses, and infrastructure to deliver the content and administer rights management on a just in time basis to support the HEIs and their local business partners across the whole national network, instead of the need for replication of these capabilities in each university or Knowledge Exchange.

3. How can business attract the best graduates and postgraduates?

The Library has no comments under this section.

4. Financial Considerations

- **Ways in which the present financing arrangements could be made more effective**

The Library would underline the importance of improving funding streams across Government Departmental boundaries. Barriers to accessing funding and improving the flow of information need to be removed. There is clear need for 'join up' to exploit more effectively the existing infrastructure in support of this strategy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the British Library welcomes the government's aim to strengthen the links between business and universities to the benefit of the UK's economy and believes that it is well placed to work in collaboration with them to act as a "knowledge hub" to support innovation, competitiveness and growth.

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