
Response to the Lambert Review

The University of Glamorgan is grateful for this opportunity to participate in the Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration. This University has a long tradition of working closely with business and has developed innovative solutions to meet the needs of business partners.

Our response has been structured in line with the four broad questions posed by the review document.

1. Collaboration and Best Practice

The University of Glamorgan provides the full range of business services that would be expected of a modern university. These include training, consultancy, testing, contract research, licensing of IPR, spinout creation, careers services and engagement via project based work such as TCS and the Knowledge Exploitation Fund.

Specific issues that we bring to the Review Panel's attention:

- It is our experience that companies, particularly SMEs, need to adopt existing technologies/best practice rather than leading edge research (although the latter obviously has a key input to future products). This is an important consideration in developing knowledge transfer policy.
- Most academics perform research in a similar way, that is to trawl relevant peer reviewed journals for up to date information regarding their subject area. They are largely unaware of the Patent Office's database of patents and the fact that it can be exploited in the same way as journals. The University of Glamorgan has obtained KEF (Knowledge Exploitation Fund) money to help to raise awareness of this issue amongst central research support departments. It is now their job to disseminate the information gained to raise awareness of this useful resource. It is our opinion that industry is well aware of the knowledge obtained from academic publications and that it uses this resource, mainly because industry contains many ex-academics who themselves have published in journals.
- As a "new" University we are not as experienced in applying for Research Council grants as the more established institutions. Consequently, we are not as successful when we do apply. We do, however, have an excellent track record of collaboration with industry, for example, the Wound Healing Research Unit with pharmaceutical companies and the Building Materials Research Unit with construction companies.
- The University of Glamorgan is the lead partner in the **HELP Wales** programme. This is an ERDF supported project bringing together all Welsh HEIs (13 institutions) for the benefit of business. **This was the first scheme to embrace all the HEIs of one European country.** The programme enables SMEs to access academic consultancy expertise with a 50% grant contribution. The programme provides a central point of contact for SMEs to access the HEIs, the expertise is identified and matched with the SME need within 48 hours. In the first phase of the programme the following outputs were achieved:
 - ❖ Supported 351 projects for Welsh SMEs
 - ❖ Developed 288 products for Welsh SMEs

The beneficiary companies also estimated that 681 jobs were created indirectly through the delivery of HELP Wales projects.

- The University of Glamorgan is a partner in the highly successful Wales Spinout Programme (developed by Finance Wales, a subsidiary of the Welsh Development Agency, with the HEIs.) This draws together all Welsh HEIs into a framework for stimulating spinout creation. The impact at the University of Glamorgan has been to generate 6 new spinouts in the last 18 months relative to a baseline of an occasional spinout every few years prior to the programme. A key experience of the University of Glamorgan, a “new” university, is that its spinouts are resulting from teaching and Third Mission activities and are not the exclusive spin off from research.
- The University of Glamorgan has been able to develop a range of 10 new products to proof of concept stage with the financial support of the **Knowledge Exploitation Fund (KEF)** in the last 18 months. These products are capable of being licensed to businesses already trading or commercialised via spinout companies. To date 2 spinout companies have been set up, 2 licence agreements have been signed and 3 additional licence agreements are being negotiated. **The availability of KEF support was vital in initiating this type of activity since HEIs are not funded to take commercial risks.**
- The Careers Centre has played a significant role in the strategic development and co-ordination of services, which enhance student/graduate employability in partnership with employers. This strategic approach was recently highlighted by Universities UK¹ and an independent analysis² as an example of best practice, which should be shared within the sector. The following three themes are highlighted which facilitate a close working relationship with employers. These themes are linked and provide services to employers, which contribute to knowledge transfer, the recruitment process and development of graduate employability skills. Specific examples of good practice are provided for each service provision:
 1. **Experience of Work – widening opportunities for students/graduates to gain experiences of work.** Examples include:
 - ❖ *Experience Works* – provides flexible placements with a wide range of employers on a voluntary basis linked to the career aspirations of students. Funded by Careers Wales.
 - ❖ *Cymru Prosper Wales (CPW)*– project driven regional programme delivered by all HEI careers services in Wales, which is aimed at providing placements with local SME’s and the voluntary sector for students (10 weeks) and graduates (12 weeks). The placements are negotiated to meet the needs of employers who pay half the cost of the placement. This project is funded externally by ELWa.
 - ❖ *Extension of CPW Programme* – this will include placements with the public and private sectors (non SME’s). Informed by the need to reflect the drivers within the regional economy by working in closer partnership with those organisations and across sectors. Facilitating business advice and networking both externally and internally within the University. Awaiting funding from EU bid.
 2. **Recruitment Services to Employers - meeting the needs of the economy by facilitating the process of matching students/graduates to the recruitment needs of employers.** Examples include:
 - ❖ *Graduate Wales* – web based recruitment services. The only FREE recruitment service specialising in graduate and student employment in Wales. There are no restrictions on location, number of employees or business sector. Opportunities go from entry-level positions through to management and includes temporary, permanent, full time and part time vacancies. Funded by ELWa/EU.
 - ❖ *Job Hunting Guide to Working in Wales* – redresses the balance in terms of facilitating job hunting at a regional level due to the lack of employer information available on Welsh based companies which are predominantly SME’s and the Public Sector. This information will also be web based.

¹ Universities UK, (2002). [Enhancing Employability: Recognising Diversity](#). CSU

² Centre for Research into Quality, UCE in Birmingham, (2002). [Analysis and Overview of Work Experience and Employability plans of Welsh Higher Education Institutions, 2001-02](#). Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

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- ❖ *On-line Vacancy Bulletins and e-guidance.* – free to employers who contact the Careers Centre and includes sandwich placement opportunities, future vacancies for students and current vacancies for graduates.
 - ❖ *Employment Bureau* – provides employers with a recruitment service which aims to meet the need for short term / on demand workforce. This includes not only term time paid work but also summer paid opportunities.

3. Learning from Work – developing creative and holistic strategies, which facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills development. Examples include:

- ❖ *CPD Programme* – aimed at graduates who work for SME's who do not have the organisational structures and resources to take advantage of appropriate CPD opportunities. University of Glamorgan to become a Lead Body to develop this pan Wales programme. Funded by ELWa.
- ❖ *Careers Management Skills (CMS)* – a flexible learning platform, which will facilitate the reflection on skills developed in the workplace. Web based careers management programme, which is underpinned by labour market information at a local and national level.
- ❖ *CRAC Insight Plus Programmes*- accreditation of student work experience (broadly defined) and involves employers as mentors in the development and reflection of skills development in the workplace. Funded by the WDA/ELWa.

2. Barriers to working with Business

- The University of Glamorgan has organised itself so that there are clear, single points of contact for businesses. Knowledge transfer is managed via a Commercial Services Office, which is a department in the University. This department trades externally as UGCS Ltd and works to business-recognised standards such as ISO 9001. This aims to provide interfaces, which are comfortable both for business and academic staff. Similarly undergraduate/graduate employment matters are co-ordinated via the University's Careers Centre. These arrangements appear to operate effectively and are understood by business.
- Our experience of SMEs is that they are not concerned with obtaining qualifications per se, rather with skills that provide “business benefits”. Nevertheless, HEIs are primarily funded to deliver accredited courses. This is a mismatch between market demand and supplier funding.
- An HEI needs to cover its' overheads, just like any other organisation. This can be a barrier, particularly with some smaller companies who are very price sensitive. Some companies/individuals occasionally point out that they pay their taxes and therefore should not need to pay (much) for the services of HEIs
- We have observed a tension within some larger organisations where directors want well educated staff and appreciate the need for skills related training “on-the job” while project managers, who actually recruit, want “oven ready” staff.
- There are several officers of the University as well as a dedicated office who are able to advise on Intellectual Property matters. The main issue is that academics are not aware that patenting before publishing their research is a valid option. This idea is perpetuated by measuring research excellence by the Research Assessment Exercise, which holds publications, and research grants in higher regard than patents and technology transfer. The University is undertaking a series of seminars to raise staff awareness of the validity of the alternatives and complementary measures to publishing research work, such as patenting.

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- There are wide ranging issues related to the funding for activities related to Third Mission activities, which remain problematic for institutions. The main concern surrounds the uncertainty related to funding which is often fixed term and can have a negative effect on delivering what soon become core activities, which rely on uncertain short term funding. Staff who deliver Third Mission activities should have the same CPD opportunities and recognition as those who deliver other missions within institutions. The turnover of staff caused by short term funding mechanisms also has an impact on the continuity and quality of services offered to employers with a loss of expertise to the University.

3. Recruitment of best graduates/post graduates- technology

- The needs of employers should remain a high priority in the validation of vocational awards and the process of consultation with the particular sector remains transparent. Examples of good practice that exist need to be shared with others and external validation by professional bodies should remain a high priority.
- HEI customers are primarily students i.e. individuals. This can lead to the proliferation of populist degree titles. If businesses wish to replace students as the primary customers, they need to direct students to the courses they require. This will involve somehow “buying” students as potential employees. This could mean sponsorship, for example. The alternative is government intervention such as financial inducements to students to selected courses which map onto future perceived skills shortages/employer dictated needs.
- Fast-tracking the impact that graduates can make within the economy must be addressed by strategies related to CPD and continued support for graduates.
- Opportunities for employers to be involved in sponsorship and a variety of flexible student placements to develop the relationship between the individual student and employer must go some way of addressing the issue related to recruiting *the best graduate*. In an ideal world the recruitment process must start earlier with some medium term planning and investment from employers in terms of building up the relationship with the *best graduates*. An example of this may well include developing such provision as a framework for Graduate Apprenticeships within more sectors and within all HEI's.

4. Finance

- **If Third Mission activities are to succeed then mechanisms for providing core funding need to be translated into reality.** HEFCW has started this process but the scale of funding for Third Mission work remains dwarfed by Teaching and Research income. EU Objective 1 funding has underpinned developments within Wales but this funding comes to an end in 2006 .
- Development of services on a pan Wales (regional) basis is a strategic issue which needs to be addressed and may be an appropriate way of funding and developing services to employers, especially in relation to recruitment services.