

Dear Mr. Lambert,

Thank you for requesting a response to the Lambert Review of Business - University from King's College London. We offer the following comments:

1. Best Practice in Business University Collaboration in the UK

a) Collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry and universities is the exemplar because (i) the importance of R&D to business is demonstrable, (ii) companies have dedicated university liaison staff, and (iii) acceptable contracts have been negotiated.

b) The Scottish Development Agency leads the RDAs south of the border in generating value from the science base through proof of principle grants, funded industrial consultancies and a range of other initiatives.

c) Within London, university partnerships in seed funds, networks and science enterprise centres have transformed our capability to respond to the needs of businesses, whether start-up or established. Future support from HEIF2 and the London Development Agency will be essential to build on these initiatives.

d) Within King's, research contracts with UK industry account for £10 million/annum whilst over 15 spin-out companies in biotech and IT sectors have been formed. However, one of the most beneficial long-term partnerships is with Serco, the facilities management company, to provide the civilian staffing and services to the Joint Services Command and Staff College at Shrivenham. This collaboration is based on trust and mutual interdependence. King's was recently awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher Education in part for its work in this partnership.

2. Barriers to Business University Collaboration

There are broadly three areas that require attention to improve relationships:

- i) improved networking and knowledge transfer mechanisms,
- ii) more and better trained business liaison and technology transfer staff in universities, and
- iii) greater trust between potential collaborators.

With regard to the last point, more could be done to promote standardised pricing and contracts to avoid starting from first principles on each project. This would be particularly valuable in interactions with small and medium size companies that do not regularly work with universities.

3. Graduate / Postgraduate Skills

The questions here are primarily directed at business. However, there is clearly a need to improve the transferable skills of graduates and postgraduates. The establishment of science enterprise centres can play a role here by bringing entrepreneurial teaching and business practitioners to contribute to the curriculum. However, if such experience is to become widespread amongst the student community, innovative ways of utilising the limited resource available will need to be developed.

4. Financial Consideration

While there are many (arguably too many) funding schemes or tax credits to encourage business-university interaction or generation of new business opportunities, there are gaps. Consideration should be given to:

i) Innovation grants awarded to companies that do not regularly interact with universities to be substantially spent within a university to facilitate the development of new products or services or entry into new markets. Programmes could be milestone with the proportion of company funding increasing as milestones are hit.

ii) Technology verification grants allocated to universities to take exciting research findings to the point that companies or seed funds will invest in the development and commercialisation. Many proposals for venture funding are rejected as "too early" or more precisely because the technical risk is judged too high and yet conventional research funding sources will not consider such "applied" research. To reduce the bureaucracy of applying for quite small sums of money for individual projects, we recommend an allocation and monitor procedure rather than application and award scheme.

Yours sincerely,

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