

The Lambert Review Consultation

Questions for consultation

1. Examples of best practice and excellence in business-university collaboration in the UK

Some examples from York St John.

- York St John has a history of working closely with large publicly funded employers i.e. the Health Service and the Education Service to provide structured, accredited student placements as part of degree programmes.
- York St John has run a mandatory, personal and professional development module (PPD) for many years. This module has facilitated the sourcing and accreditation of work placements for students. A version of this module will be retained in the new joint honours framework.
- CPD programmes are held regularly by the School of Professional Health Studies and the School of Education and Theology. All programmes have a considerable amount of employer input into curriculum development. The School of Professional Health Studies hosts a particularly innovative masters programme which facilitates interaction and shared learning between occupational therapists and physiotherapists.
- The School of Sports Science and Psychology works closely with the Joseph Rowntree Trust in York, providing exercise programmes for their elderly residents. It will be important to include the trust/ social enterprise sector in the consultation process in addition to private and public funded business organisations, as this sector is growing fast and it is one where some HE institutions have considerable expertise.
- York St John has recently designed and run a particularly successful programme for new managers in SMEs in North Yorkshire. The New Managers Programme was a part time programme aimed at individuals who were in management/supervisory positions in their companies but who did not have formal management qualifications. The New Managers Programme provided part of an accreditation framework for the participants by offering 40 credits at level 1 for successful completion of the programme. The development of this programme was subsidised through the ESF co-financing route provided by the Learning and Skills Council in North Yorkshire. This partnership worked particularly well.

2. What are the main barriers to strengthening relationships between business and universities?

The main barriers are as follows:

Intermediaries

- Lack of accessible, accurate databases of local SMEs. Business Links should be encouraged to provide these to HE institutions in a useable format, free of charge.

- Few opportunities to meet SMEs on a sectoral basis. LSC's should be encouraged to host a series of sectorally based events to bring together business and HE.
- On a strategic level the clusters chosen by Yorkshire Forward for specific funding, emphasis and concentration do not have direct synergy with the subject areas covered at York St John.
- Inappropriate methods of communication are chosen by the RDA to facilitate contact between HE and SMEs. For example, the current Knowledge RICH project, while potentially effective with large companies in the long term is not likely to be effective in encouraging SMEs to contact HE institutions.

Business

- Lack of awareness of what HE can provide
- Concern that educating the workforce will enable and encourage individuals to leave the company
- Lack of value placed on education and training. This influences views on cost and value for money which leads to a demand from the SME sector that training be free of charge

HE

- Too slow to respond to opportunities
- Lack of understanding of what business wants
- Inflexibility of the validation system to cope with customisation of standard HE products to fit business sector needs
- Barriers to non-HEFCE funded students being fully integrated into the HE institution i.e. difficulties with accessing the library and IT infrastructure etc

3. How can business attract the best graduates/post grads with appropriate skills particularly technology?

Adopt a 'home grown' approach by sponsoring specific degree programmes. Sponsorship to include employer involvement in curriculum development, internships in the workplace, staff exchange between HE institution and the workplace to ensure a complete understanding of the environment and culture. Carry out an audit of specialist equipment necessary in the workplace and ensure that the HE institution and the company are working to the same benchmark.