

EPC Policy Forum 20 May 2009

Knowledge Transfer Workshop

UK Research is number two in the world after USA. However, UK knowledge transfer is well below the league table among the developed countries. The conversion rate of research to enterprise is about one ninth of that of USA.

Questions

What are the barriers of turning UK's successful research into businesses?

What are the incentives to encourage knowledge transfer?

What are government policies and funding models that could improve knowledge transfer in universities?

Is the government measuring the correct outputs to encourage knowledge transfer?

What messages and suggestions should EPC tell the government?

Barriers

University bureaucracy

Low speeds of response from university central administration and academics

Time scale in business is shorter

KPT is at fully economically cost, however some universities taxation schemes discourage KTPs.

Project objectives may change due to the changing market environment during the duration of the projects

Knowledge transfer may not be a significant element in the VC's performance measure

Low significance in league tables

RAE/REF

too focus in publications

may not be relevant to the immediate needs of business

e.g. a university which had 22 TCS/KTP per year has stopped have any KTP.

Some university spin up company schemes may alienate local SMEs

Suggestions

Some funding could be earmarked for research proposals that have an explicit knowledge transfer elements, i.e. business plans, a KTP as a follow on project

EPSRC has introduced an “impact” element in proposals

Principal investigators should have the full control of the project funding

Empowerment of staff

Staff development in knowledge transfer

Research excellence should not be just international (RAE criteria) as local significance could be developed into global business

Equal opportunity and recognition for knowledge transfer

Staff strong in knowledge transfer may not be promoted as compared to their research colleagues

Review university taxation

Review league tables' criteria and weightings in favour of knowledge transfer

Review UG learning experience, shift from subject knowledge content focus to project base and learning outcomes, c.f. work based learning

Cultural issues

Social issues

Mixed subject and year projects

One university has an IET accredited course that is all project based with no written examinations

School students have not been educated to be innovative. They have the mind set of one correct answer only. School league tables driven, wrong metrics?

Explicit recognition of knowledge transfer but a poor cousin of research

EEF (c.f. REF): enterprise excellence framework

Summary

Suitable measurements and equal recognition