

## Research..... and Knowledge Transfer

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### Editorial

Transferring new knowledge created through research into teaching is a primary task in any higher education institution. The importance of research knowledge transfer into teaching has been identified and debated by many authors with differing viewpoints ranging from the type of the discipline to types of departments. More insights can be gained by viewing research into teaching as a knowledge transfer process [1]. Knowledge transfer (KT) is a term used to encompass a very broad range of activities to support mutually beneficial collaborations between universities, businesses and the public sector [2]. According to Sexton and Barrett, knowledge transfer is viewed as the movement of knowledge via some channel from one individual or firm to another. In this context, this means movement of research knowledge (research findings, skills or processes) from researchers (be they academics, researchers or practitioners) to students (undergraduates or postgraduates) through teaching and other mediums such as seminars, workshops, conferences and project-based work [3].

In addition to teaching and research, one of the most important tasks of the University is the transfer of knowledge. Expertise is transferred from the University to corporate enterprises through close contacts and co-operation between academics [4]. For academics, KT can be a way of gaining new perspectives on possible directions and approaches for research. This two-way exchange element of KT is at the heart of successful and sustainable collaboration [2]. Research creates new ideas and advances the frontiers of knowledge. To put this knowledge to work, it must be transformed into new technologies, new products and new services. Through support of scientific research, industry business aims to achieve explorations and inventions that would give it advantages, such as the lower cost, faster development, higher productivity and better quality etc., that enable its products to win competition in the global markets [4].

Transforming the results of scientific research into new products is, a complex process involving a broad range of actors. There is a need to ensure that researchers and practice field work closely together and maximize the social and economic benefits of new ideas [5]. The main reason for science to interact with industry is the financial sources obtained from research collaboration. Another reason is the possibility to expose students and academic staff to practical problems, create employment opportunities for their graduates and gain access to applied technological areas. The future financing of research institutes and universities is becoming more and more dependent on economic institutes [3].

Knowledge transfer includes a range of activity usually directed at producing practical outcomes, often-but not necessarily - stemming from research. Recognized categories of KT include:

- Consultancy or applied services aimed primarily at income generation and based primarily on the application of available knowledge.
- Research-based consultancy aimed at the generation of new knowledge or the creation of new applications, but conducted on a contractual basis to achieve a specific outcome.
- Outreach activities, relating to work conducted with business and public-sector partners. These may range from workplace training, to research related activities such as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships.
- Enterprise activities involving near to market research, such as Proof of Concept programs.
- Commercial exploitation of intellectual property generated within the University, leading to a range of possible outcomes including patents, licensing agreements, and the creation of spin-out companies.
- Teaching-based activities delivered on a commercial basis, such as CPD [6].

Finally, effective Knowledge Transfer needs preparation from both partners in the process. Research on Knowledge Transfer suggests that the capacity to absorb new knowledge is heavily influenced by preparedness, prior knowledge and openness to change. There is also a need for the partners involved in transfer activity to share knowledge bases, cultures and agendas [7].

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