

Report

Employer Engagement Initiative Evaluation: Main Report

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Finally, we would like to thank our colleague, Helen Connor, for alerting us to relevant literature and issues in employer engagement.

Brenda Johnston and Alison Fuller
School of Education, University of Southampton
December 2010

Foreword

At the University of Southampton, working with employers is an essential part of our business. Our students benefit from placements and employment opportunities in a global marketplace, our staff collaborate on world-class research and innovation, and the transfer and interchange of knowledge between the University and business is vital to the economy. Employers play a key role in programme design and contribute to the learning experience of our students. However, the support from HEFCE for this project gave us an invaluable opportunity to learn how we need to constantly adapt to make our education offer more accessible and suitable to an audience less familiar to us: those in work and their employers. This has meant a review of our administrative and quality processes, and consideration of our approach to curriculum development, mindful that we are all life long learners.

This evaluation of the project was built in to our original proposal, and gave us the valuable opportunity to learn from feedback as the project progressed, and to document the project in some detail. This report is its substantive output and I would strongly recommend it to you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light yellow background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Debra Humphris'.

Professor Debra Humphris
Pro Vice-Chancellor Education

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Executive summary

Purposes of the Employer Engagement Initiative

The Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI) at the University of Southampton aimed to increase the coherence of the University's approach to employer engagement, especially its ability to offer flexible education at postgraduate level in the shape of work-based learning (WBL), online/e-learning and flexible programmes. In doing this, the Initiative sought to facilitate employee learning, address employer needs, and contribute to the long-term development of the University in line with University strategic priorities.

The Initiative was originally planned to consist of three phases:

1. Building and testing flexible academic processes for employer engagement, 2008–2010,
2. Cascading, extending and capacity building, 2010–2012,
3. Formalising and integrating employer engagement activity (no funds sought for Phase Three).
(Employer Engagement Initiative, Annexe A, Business Plan)

The overall aims of the Initiative as expressed in the bid were to:

1. Address the current fragmented approach to employer engagement
2. Make changes to our [the University's] academic processes to enable flexible delivery of M level education
3. Fund three pilot projects at M level to test cooperation with Business, through content, flexible delivery and new funding mechanisms.
4. Establish a Design Centre at Southampton responding to the needs of employers.
(Employer Engagement Initiative Summary Document, Annex B, 2007)

The evaluation

The evaluation provided ongoing formative evaluation during the course of the Initiative and a summative evaluation in Autumn 2010. Such an evaluation is not straightforward. Cultural change and impact are hard to assess and may take years to evolve. It is not easy to separate out the effects of a particular initiative and other intervening factors. In this report, we can only provide an interim assessment of what has happened and what the effects appear to be so far, with some tentative predictions about the future (especially given the current unsettled state of British higher education).

Phase 1 September 2008–April 2009

The purposes of this phase were to:

- improve our (evaluator) understandings of this complex Initiative;
- provide a baseline understanding for the EEI team of the project's starting points in terms of positions, expectations and feelings of the various people involved;
- provide some initial, tentative feedback on progress of the Initiative;
- inform the design of the second phase of the evaluation.

Phase 2 May 2009–August 2010

The purposes of this phase were to:

- provide further understandings for the EEI team of the Initiative's development, based on the perceptions of the various stakeholders involved and our interpretations of those;
- provide ongoing formative feedback on the progress of the Initiative;
- produce a summative report.

There are various components to the Initiative and it has been necessary to speak to a wide range of those involved: EEI team members; Steering Group members; Research and Innovation Services (R&IS) representatives; pilot Masters programme representatives; Business Fellows; and others with relevant knowledge. We have carried out 31 interviews with 25 people.

Contextual factors

Contextual factors played a central role in the working of the Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI).

The change in **external economic conditions** between 2007, when the bid was written, and 2008 when the Initiative started meant that the EEI functioned in a vastly different environment from that envisaged by the bid's authors and the Higher Education Funding Council and had a profound effect on what the Initiative was able to achieve. Employers were less able to finance continuing professional development (CPD) for their employees.

The **internal university environment** also had a powerful effect on achievements. Initial staffing challenges delayed the start of the Initiative. In October 2009 a new Vice-Chancellor took office, initiating and pursuing policies likely to encourage the development of flexible delivery of courses, but also initiating a period of reorganisation. This made it more difficult to achieve concrete changes during this period because of the uncertainties about structures, processes and the role of relevant personnel in the new structure.

Key Findings

The evaluation's key findings are reported in relation to each of the Initiative's central aims:

Aim 1 Increasing the coherence of the university approach to employer engagement

The EEI achieved the following:

- Worked with R&IS to develop the university's virtual Gateway, through enhancing presentation of the existing CPD offer and assisting with an analysis of competitor websites;
- Directly engaged in or facilitated the following processes: general awareness raising within the university; awareness raising of needs and interests external to the university; specific interactions between particular university units and employers and sector representatives; adding CPD discussions to existing meetings between the university and employers; and a contribution to cultural change in the university;
- Implemented three audit and mapping activities (an initial audit of existing flexible, postgraduate provision, a mapping project for the Maritime University Strategic Research Group, and an assessment of university activity within the maritime sector);
- Developed understandings about what was and what was not likely to be of interest to employers;
- Contributed to the development of a Corporate Relationship Strategy.

Although several factors assisted the Initiative (the existence and contributions of Research and Innovation Services, Careers Destinations, existing academic-employer links), other factors posed challenges for the EEI (non-standard processes across 20 Schools, communication within a large university and the difficulties of building trust between different parts of the institution with different processes, structures, personnel and cultures).

Aim 2 Changes to academic processes to enable flexible delivery of M level education

The EEI achieved the following:

- Submitted the business case for changing various administrative systems in the University which will make flexible delivery more possible;
- A Technology Enhanced Learning Guide offering principles of practice, identifying key issues for planning and managing TEL projects, seeking to encourage academic engagement in TEL, and providing details of internal and external people and organisations to contact about proposed projects;
- Reviewing the quality assurance procedures of the University and assessing their suitability for employer responsive provision, and proposing various options for quality assurance of flexible learning courses;
- Input into the Curriculum Innovation Programme within the University, especially the sub-sections of postgraduate taught courses and continuing professional development;
- Initiation of discussion about various financial aspects of flexible provision, including payment-in-kind and actual costs of teaching particular courses.

Although some factors assisted the EEI (the possibility of ‘workarounds’ and a culture of working things out), others worked against the Initiative including registration, financial, IT and quality systems designed to support full-time students on full-length programmes.

Aim 3 Pilot projects

The EEI achieved the following:

- As this report goes to press, a flexibly delivered, postgraduate certificate in Environmental Health, leading potentially to a full Masters pathway, is being developed. Not only will this deliver a new programme to the university, but also a model of how such a course can be developed using a variety of expertise, including that of freelance learning designers.
- One module in an Energy Certificate has been developed.
- The team has been involved in exploring in some depth the possibility of an undergraduate programme tailored to the needs of a specific employer, the outcome of this is as yet unclear.

Although some factors assisted the EEI in developing its pilots of postgraduate flexible provision (pre-existing flexible units and programmes within the University with related expertise in programme development, administration and marketing), other factors provided challenges including the traditional focus in the university on full-time, traditional-age students which meant there was little incentive or need for Schools or academics to investigate other models. Various options for development were explored as the project developed.

Aim 4 Design Centre

The loss of the building where the Design Centre was to be was an early major blow to the Initiative, making it impossible to have such a Centre.

Other matters

The EEI aimed to recruit 60 new M level FTE students on to flexible credit-based courses, co-funded by employers. It had been envisaged that the ASN allocation would be used on the pilot courses described previously. This proved problematic for three main reasons:

- Suitable courses could not be developed in time, although the new Environment Health Certificate should recruit from October 2011 on a part-time basis.
- ASNs were difficult to use. In order to get 60 ASNs (FTE), the university would need to recruit perhaps 200 or 250 part-time Masters students for a year to do one or two modules in order to reach 60 ASNs.

- The University has other groups of students who may fit the ASN criteria, but it is hard to access the relevant data as it is currently not routinely collected.

This picture was complicated by the somewhat complex and unclear nature of the funding for ASNs.

Emerging themes

Engagement with employers presents universities with various dilemmas and challenges relating to the nature and extent of risk taken on and effort and resources invested, as priorities are balanced. These are documented in this report and are also clearly visible in the wider literature (*inter alia* Bolden *et al.* 2010; Connor and Hirsh 2008; and the Lambert Review 2003).

There are significant cultural differences within sub-sections of the University as well as between the University and employers. Such differences are well documented in the external literature. Such cultural differences will continue to exist, given the complex nature of higher education. We suggest that the negative effects as regards engagement with employers can be minimised by the recommendations below.

Short-term funding affects the nature of goals and achievements; it is hard to develop sustainable relationships, processes and products within short funding periods.

Recommendations

The University should make a clear decision about how far, if at all, it wants to position itself with regard to employer engagement in M level provision (and across the curriculum) and take action accordingly. Is it a strategic priority? If so, certain steps should be taken to facilitate such activity. These include:

- A clearer and more explicit path of authority and leadership for employer and community engagement within the University to signal its importance.
- Systemic co-ordination of relationships and systems within the University as regards employer engagement, through strategies, formalised systems of co-operation and audit and mapping activities.
- More active interactions outside the University at e.g. industry/university matching events, perhaps with a particular focus on large employers and existing employer partnerships.
- Adjustment of working patterns, workload models and promotion systems within the University to facilitate some staff focusing on such employer engagement.
- Adjustment of financial, registration and accreditation systems and requirements to enable more flexible provision.
- More flexible support of e-learning provision.
- The limitations of short-term funding must be considered and recognised in bids, which should be based on realistic, achievable aims within the timescale.
- Achievements are likely to be enhanced by clear line management structures within short-term projects and by co-location of those responsible for 'delivering the project'.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purposes of the Employer Engagement Initiative

The Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI) at the University of Southampton aimed to increase the coherence of the University's approach to employer engagement, especially its ability to offer flexible education at postgraduate level in the shape of work-based learning (WBL), online/e-learning and flexible programmes. In doing this, it sought to facilitate employee learning, address employer needs, and contribute to the long-term development of the University in line with University strategic priorities as described in the Enterprise Strategy (October 2007) and Learning and Teaching Strategy (2006-2010).

The Initiative was originally conceived of as consisting of three phases as follows:

1. Building and testing flexible academic processes for employer engagement - 2008-2010,
2. Cascading, extending and capacity building - 2010 - 2012,
3. Formalising and integrating employer engagement activity (no funds sought for Phase Three). (Employer Engagement Initiative, Annexe A, Business Plan)

Effectively, this entailed a two-year scoping phase between 2008 and 2010 (Phase 1), with the strong possibility of applying for two more years of funding from 2010-2012 (Phase 2) for developing and extending beyond what had been achieved in the first two years. A copy of the original bid can be found in Appendix A. It became clear during the course of the project that continuation funding would not be available, after all. Aims and actions in the EEI at the University of Southampton were adjusted accordingly. The Initiative should be evaluated within this revised trajectory.

The overall aims of the Initiative as expressed in the bid were to:

1. Address the current fragmented approach to employer engagement through:

- (a) A Business-Education Gateway interfacing both externally and internally, virtually and physically,
- (b) The development of an Employer Engagement Framework enabled through sector Springboards that promote understanding and confidence between all parties to provide a professional approach to employer engagement,
- (c) The development of staff with respect to employer engagement,
- (d) The use of Business Link Tutors in academic schools to professionalise employer engagement at UG and PG level,
- (e) The coordination of the business link tutor group as a network to strategise employer engagement,
- (f) Elevate activity through a Business Manager as a pivot to mobilise engagement with business and skills agencies through outward facing activities that will form the basis for our Engagement Framework and effective business models.

2. Make changes to our [the University's] academic processes to enable flexible delivery of M level education, with respect to:

- (a) Governance of awards, space, APEL mechanisms, QA procedures,
- (b) New 'awards' based on the employer Certification Programme and the Career Enhancement Programme for employees - credit accumulation, supporting and monitoring 'roll on - roll off' students,
- (c) E-learning frameworks/pedagogy and robust E-assessment procedures, and
- (d) A credit-based funding mechanism to include a co-funding charge and a premium for flexibility.

3. Fund three pilot projects at M level to test cooperation with Business, through content, flexible delivery and new funding mechanisms with respect to: WBL (Nursing: Leadership

Capacity Building), E-distance learning (Environmental Health) and Credit Accumulation (Cross School Masters in Professional Development.)

4. **Establish a Design Centre at Southampton** responding to the needs of employers as expressed in the SEEDA regional economic strategy 2006-2016 which identifies innovation and creativity as a key objective for global competitiveness. The Centre will offer innovative interdisciplinary M level education across Arts, Engineering and Management, led by Business, for Business and together with FT students. It will see the blurring of education – business boundaries.
(Employer Engagement Initiative Summary Document, Annex B, 2007)

The focus on postgraduate provision sought to exploit the University's expertise as a research-intensive university. The provision sought to assist organisations to develop their workforce through increasing continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities that would appeal to employers, primarily credit bearing modules and programmes (likely to be of interest to employees for career enhancement) but also non-credit bearing (likely to be of interest to employers). Connor and Hirsh (2008), in their review of the articulation of employer needs and higher education provision, confirmed this likely division of interest. The Initiative was allocated additional student numbers (ASNs) of the equivalent of 60 full-time students (FTEs), co-funded by employers, to be registered for 2010/11.

The EEI had an underspend in July 2010, at the end of the first two years, and the funding council agreed that this money could be carried over to the following financial year to allow for some activities, started in Phase 1, to come to fruition. This report has been written before these extended activities have been carried out.

There are many potential areas of employer engagement for a university (including research collaborations, consultancy, student placements with employers, graduate and postgraduate employment). Although related and synergistic with the Initiative, these were not the primary focus of its activities which relate to the development of flexible employee learning. It is, however, important to recognise these other aspects of employer engagement because a diversity of such activities can be mutually supportive, as Bolden *et al.* (2010) in their research-based discussion of employer engagement pointed out and as was recognised by the interviewees in this evaluation.

The University of Southampton is being restructured, but throughout this report we will use the nomenclature of the old structure (Faculties and Schools) that existed during the period of the EEI.

1.2 The evaluation process

1.2.1 Role of the evaluation

The role of the evaluation has been to provide ongoing formative evaluation to the EEI and to provide a summative evaluation of the Initiative in Autumn 2010. During the formative phase, our focus was to assist the development of the project by acting in the role of 'critical friend'. We aimed to be as open as possible about processes and evolving understandings within the limits imposed by the need for confidentiality for the people we interviewed in the course of the evaluation. Together with the EEI team members, we aimed to work out how our formative evaluation could best contribute to the achievement of the Initiative's aims.

Our remit has been to *evaluate* the changes arising from the EEI activity, including exploration of cultural change (e.g. factors inhibiting/facilitating cultural change as regards employer engagement). An additional aim has been to identify 'lessons learned' and their implications for the future. In contrast, the EEI director/team members have had responsibility for *monitoring* project outputs and

meeting targets (i.e. concrete indicators of progress as described in the EEI proposal (Annexe A, Business Plan Contents, p.7-9), although they have, of course, been reflecting on how the Initiative is developing. Progress in relation to these 'performance indicators' has fed into the evaluation, and detailed reporting on these matters is to be found in the monitoring reports to HEFCE.

Throughout the evaluation, the evaluation team has met regularly with Mary Morrison, the EEI Director, to give interim feedback on the findings arising out of the evaluation interviews as well as to provide information on the progress of the evaluation.

Evaluation of a complex project such as the EEI is not straightforward. Cultural change and impact are hard to assess and may take years to evolve. It is not easy to separate out the effects of a particular initiative and other intervening factors. In this report, we can only provide an interim assessment of what has happened and what the effects appear to be so far, with some tentative predictions about the future (especially given the current unsettled state of British higher education). *The Initial Evaluation of the Strategic Development Fund* (SQW July 2007) highlighted such difficulties faced by evaluations (p.10).

1.2.2 Phases of the evaluation

Phase 1 September 2008–April 2009

The purposes of this phase were to:

- improve our (evaluator) understandings of this complex Initiative;
- provide a baseline understanding for the EEI team of the project's starting points in terms of positions, expectations and feelings of the various people involved;
- provide some initial, tentative feedback on progress of the Initiative;
- inform the design of the second phase of the evaluation.

In this scoping phase of the evaluation (September 2008-April 2009), we (1) read relevant documentation (information on the Initiative Blackboard site, information on the HEFCE website); (2) interviewed 15 people involved in the Initiative; (3) analysed the interviews and reported to the EEI team and Steering Group; and (4) developed a plan for the post-scoping phase of the evaluation with the agreement and input of the EEI team. Table 1 below presents a summary of the interviews carried out in Phase 1 of the evaluation. The report from this first phase of the evaluation can be found at Appendix B of this report.

Table 1

Phase 1 interviews	
Role of interviewee	Number of interviews
EEI team members	2
Steering Group members	4
Research and Innovation Services (R&IS)	3
Professional Services	3
Pilot Masters representatives	3
Total	15

Phase 2

From May 2009-August 2010, we carried out Phase 2 of the evaluation. The purposes of this phase were to:

- provide further understandings for the EEI team of the Initiative's development, based on the perceptions of the various stake-holders involved and our interpretations of those;
- provide ongoing formative feedback on the progress of the Initiative;
- produce a final summative report.

The aim of the final summative report is to present and interpret the views of a range of important stakeholders in the Initiative. We have also drawn on external literature available on employer engagement, especially reviews of such activity. We hope to provide a constructive report of use to:

- HEFCE as they fund future initiatives;
- the EEI team as they reflect on the Initiative;
- the University in considering how to capitalise on learning from the EEI; and
- the University when planning future projects and as it takes employer engagement forward.

In the second phase of the evaluation (May 2009–August 2010), we have read documents related to the Initiative, including the documentation produced for the Steering Group meetings and the monitoring reports submitted to HEFCE. In addition, we interviewed the main people involved in the Initiative, analysed the interviews and reported regularly to the EEI team and Steering Group at its quarterly meetings.

There are various components to the Initiative and it has been necessary to speak to a wide range of those involved: EEI team members; Steering Group members; Research and Innovation Services (R&IS) representatives; pilot Masters programme representatives; Business Fellows; and others with relevant knowledge. We have carried out 31 interviews with 25 people. The Business Fellows were mostly interviewed at the beginning of the evaluation to capture expectations at the beginning of their fellowship and then again at the end to capture their reflections on their experiences. In this phase, we did not interview representatives of the professional services in the University as we had interviewed them extensively in Phase 1 and such interviews would have offered little that was new in Phase 2 as the changes taking place within professional services were still at a planning, rather than operational, stage by the end of the evaluation. The Phase 1 report contained detailed information about the early interviews with professional services representatives (See Appendix B).

Table 2 below presents the interviews carried out in Phase 2 of the evaluation. Some roles overlapped (e.g. people on both the Steering Group and in another category), in which case the main affiliation of the interviewee has been selected for inclusion in the table. Six key people were interviewed in both phases of the evaluation.

Table 2

Role of interviewee	Phase 2 Interviews	
	Numbers of interviews	Number of people interviewed
EEL team members	5	4
Steering Group members	7	7
Pilot Masters representatives	5	3
Business Fellows	9	5
Research and Innovation Services	4	4
Others with relevant knowledge	2	2
Total	31	25

1.2.3 The interviews

The broad issues for discussion in the early interviews in the evaluation (Phase 1 and early Phase 2) were as follows:

- Role of the interviewee in the University,
- Role of the interviewee in the Initiative,
- Interviewee understandings of the Initiative (including relationship to working processes, working structures, engagement with employers);
- Potential impacts on the interviewee's area of work,
- Place of the Initiative in the bigger picture of priorities and demands within the institution/in the interviewee's area,
- Factors facilitating the Initiative in the interviewee's area? (e.g. culture, structures),
- Obstacles to achieving the aims of the Initiative in the interviewee's area (e.g. culture, structures),
- Key events/changes, if any, that need to happen in order for the EEL to have effects in the interviewee's area (processes, structures, culture);
- Communication between different strands of the Initiative,
- Specific additional contributions being made by the EEL,
- Initial effects of the Initiative.

Discussion in the later interviews focused on reflections on:

- contributions of the EEL up to the point of the interview (including concrete examples);
- contributions of the EEL in the future;
- how to do things differently were the Initiative to happen again.

The questions for the interviews are available at Appendix C.

The strategy of talking to a wide range of stakeholders enabled the interviewees to discuss their early experiences of the EEL, as well as to identify the diverse implications of the Initiative for academics, administrators and employers.

In reporting on findings, it is necessary to maintain confidentiality as far as possible, so attribution of comments is limited to the interviewee's role. Those interviewed have been alerted to the fact that it will be difficult to maintain full confidentiality.

1.3 Staffing of the Employer Engagement Initiative

The Employer Engagement team consisted initially of two part-time directors (Pat Maier and Mary Morrison). Pat Maier moved to another post in the University in the early months of the Initiative and Mary Morrison became the sole, full-time director of the EEL. Additionally, in the second year there were three internal Business Fellows (Dr Richard Wills, Dr Roberta Comunian, and three Geodata representatives functioning as one fellow) and two external Business Fellows (Dr Brendan Webster and

Mark Merritt), each working half-time on the project. One of the internal Business Fellowships was occupied by three people (Dr Chris Hill, Dr Andy Murdock and Dr Julia Branson) to combine the skills of the three people involved; they worked for Geodata, a self-funding unit in the University associated with the School of Geography. The Business Fellows worked across the two sectors focused on in the Initiative (the energy and maritime sectors) and were co-ordinated by Madeline Paterson. In addition, there was administrative support from Hannah Butler, for 0.4 FTE. Chris Roberts worked on quality assurance issues for approximately eight days. The Initiative had a Steering Group comprising various relevant senior University staff, relevant external employer and sector representatives, and the Business Fellows. It was chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education, Professor Debra Humphris. A list of the Steering Group members can be found at Appendix D.

1.4 Structure of the report

The substantive sections of the report will start by describing the background to the Initiative, including both factors external and internal to the University. The report will then describe findings and issues which have emerged. Finally, it will explore implications of the findings and lessons learned.

2. Background to the Employer Engagement Initiative

The EEI took place in a challenging environment and it is useful to sketch out some relevant features in order to make sense of interviewee comments and the path of the Initiative.

2.1 Environmental factors external to the University

The Initiative started in 2008, just as the world economic crisis was unfolding, while the bid for the Initiative had been written and awarded in a far more prosperous economic climate. It became clear early on that the economic crisis affected the capacity and inclination of employers to invest in training of their employees. It also affected HEFCE's capacity to offer further funding for the Initiative as envisaged in the original bidding process. These effects impacted on the kinds of activities it was possible for the Initiative to undertake and the time available for activities to come to fruition. Additionally, the general election in May 2010 and the long lead-up period to this introduced further uncertainty into the funding for public bodies, including potential funders of employees on flexible Masters courses. Latterly, it seemed likely that universities as well as other public bodies would be liable to severe funding cuts, affecting their capacity to take risks and engage in new activities.

Interviewees described the backdrop to the EEI and its effects:

There've been some very big economic changes in the course of the year as well and the big themes have obviously been from the beginning of the year. Well we knew about recession but it hadn't affected universities but it had affected companies. There had been a big switch in the value of the pound both in terms of the dollar and the Euro, both of which were significant to our international trade, so this is building in a sort of potential for inflation and companies were feeling that.

The banks had crashed so companies didn't have the same freedom of access to funds that they previously had and so public authorities were very much taking a lead in the consumerism or the economy that we had over the last twelve months.

It's only been in the latter part of the last twelve months now that the university has started to feel the change and in fact once the election was announced all public authorities seemed to go into a pause mode and as we were saying earlier there's a sort of paralysis still within public authorities at the moment because of the lack of definition and clarity on the monies that they've got to spend, what budgets they can have confidence in, what employment levels they'll have and the knock on effect to local employers is that they won't be consuming any more. (Business Fellow)

Clearly the timing of all this was appalling, you know, we started this in 2007 when the economy was rolling along, everyone was happy, everyone had training budgets, everyone was trying to find ways of retaining high level skilled staff and giving them a Masters level education seemed a good idea, and by the time we actually started the project the economy was dead and everybody was desperately trying just to stay in business, so you know the timing has been appalling and that's absolutely we could not have tried to run the project at a worse time. (Steering Group member)

It's just been very hard. I feel like the last couple of years has been particularly hard to get anybody to take any risks because why would they, you know, it's not the kind of environment really that encourages people to take risks at the moment. (EEI team member)

2.2 Environmental factors internal to the University

The environment within the University was also challenging. Initially, the Initiative faced staffing challenges including the long illness and sad death of Caroline Thomas, formerly Deputy Vice-Chancellor, whose senior management leadership and support had been invaluable to the creation of

the Initiative; the maternity leave of Sarah Rogers, the co-author of the bid; and the move of the bid developer Pat Maier to another post in the University. Active and energetic senior management leadership and support became available from Pro Vice-Chancellor Debra Humphris and from the EEI director, Mary Morrison, but the first months of the Initiative were affected by these staffing challenges. These factors were commented on extensively in the Phase 1 interviews and evaluation report (See Appendix B).

The University was also increasingly facing measures of financial stringency. In the early phase, for example, a local recruitment freeze caused problems for the Initiative in that an academic central to the development of one of the pilot Masters was under additional workload pressure because of a shortage of administrators in the School.

Additionally, the University had a new Vice-Chancellor from October 2009 and a far-reaching reorganisation of the University was pending throughout the second year of the Initiative, making it hard for some players in the University to take relevant decisions or devote as much time as might have been possible otherwise to the Initiative. People were uncertain how much focus was to be put on research, teaching and enterprise respectively in the new university structure:

As interviewees described:

It's complicated by the fact that everything is changing. All of the structures in the university are changing so to some extent what we have to do is try and piggyback on to what's happening and make sure that when the [new] Faculties are in place there is some sort of space for discussion about all of these procedures I suppose. (EEI team member)

Yeah and I think that the change with the VC and then obviously the restructuring of the Faculties like as if there has been a bit of a lack of leadership in that respect within the university with the past VC stepping out and the new one coming in but sort of getting used to it before he said anything you know, it's like you know it's bound to be a suspended sort of period. (Business Fellow)

More and more people are looking over their shoulders looking at their jobs, trying to keep their head below the parapet so that it doesn't get chopped off and they don't want to go with it, so that's the tricky thing. So the support internally is difficult. (Business Fellow)

Some, however, did feel that this change of leadership at the top was helpful and that there was a new emphasis on engagement with the outside world:

You know it's pretty clear that he [the new Vice-Chancellor] wants to make sure that not only will he actively engage with the outside world, be it the business world or the political world or other parts of the academic world, he will be quite actively involved in that, and you know I think he's going to expect that across the university there is a greater involvement with the outside world. (R&IS representative)

3. Achievements and difficulties faced

Before discussing achievements and difficulties faced, we wish to acknowledge that much hard work has gone into the Employer Engagement Initiative and also that it has taken place in such demanding and unfortunate economic circumstances. This was a complex project, managed in difficult and shifting territory. As one of the Business Fellows reported:

I think that everybody did you know quite a lot and was very committed to the project.

One Steering Group member said:

I think all concerned have done the best they can to shape it in a productive way.

Such sentiments were expressed by many of the interviewees, many of whom spoke especially highly of the director of the Initiative.

In discussing achievements, it is important to recognise that there are achievements at different levels and of various natures. Some are tangible; others are less so. Some were planned in the original bid; others have emerged over time. Some have been fully realised; others are just emerging. Some seem likely to happen, while others may wither for one reason and another. As well as concrete outcomes, the Initiative has provided a learning opportunity for the University on a range of issues. As one of the EEI team explained, it offers a case study from which people can learn. This is an important contribution. Interviewees focused differentially on these various outcome types.

As difficulties arose and as opportunities presented themselves, the foci of the Initiative shifted. These changes will be discussed in the report.

This discussion will begin within the framework of the original aims of the Initiative as described in the Introduction. As well as describing achievements, we will sketch in background context on factors assisting the initiative as well as challenges it faced which help explain the nature of those achievements.

3.1 Aim 1 Increasing the coherence of the University approach to employer engagement

Various ways to increase the coherence of the University's approach to employer engagement were planned. Many were partially operationalised during the two-year funding period; some changed somewhat in nature. For example, it was thought that the proposed eight Business Tutors embedded in Schools could more usefully become Business Fellows (a term it was hoped would carry more currency in the academic context). As funding could not be continued beyond the two-year initial period, the original plan to continue support for Business Tutors embedded in Schools, but at reduced levels of funding was no longer viable. Two Business Fellows, external to the University, were appointed until July 2010, as it was hoped this would help "develop and consolidate external links" (EEI team member). Many of the activities below, especially networking and the mapping exercise were carried out by the Business Fellows.

3.1.1 Factors assisting the Employer Engagement Initiative

Within the University various factors assisted the EEI in its quest to increase the coherence of its approach to employer engagement. There was a considerable amount of pre-existing expertise and knowledge about employer engagement in relationship to research, consultancy and spin-outs, although rather less from the point of view of Masters (M) level education.

As regards professional services, R&IS (a business facing part of the University, mainly connected with research activities) and Careers Destinations (the University Careers Service) had contacts and knowledge which could be shared. As one of the EEI team explained at one stage:

We've just been sent a list of contacts that Careers Destinations have, for example, and they are happy for us to ring them up and talk to them, and I think potentially there is a lot of work for us to do, working with R&IS because they know they have collaboration managers who support each of the Faculties and Schools and they know for example who's talking to [big, well-known company name] so therefore there's the opportunity for our guys to sort of tap into that. I met XX, at Research and Innovation Services, she does a lunchtime session on modes of collaboration with the university and funding and how it works for the university, and I went to that session, I thought it was great.

As regards academic provision, various courses involving employers already existed in the different Schools, many highlighted in the Employer Engagement Audit carried out early in the Initiative. (See Appendix E for a summary of this audit.)

I mean it's gone on from the year dot. And that is very positive because when you go out to talk to academics they're talking to employers all the time. They may not be asking them about Masters level CPD but they could if we asked them to, you know, if we helped that become part of the agenda. (EEI team member)

When you come to areas like law, medicine, health, education, even engineering because of their accreditation etc, and other subject areas as well, there has been a long tradition of engagement with employers. (Steering Group member)

As regards overall University strategy, changes in the University meant that employer engagement was of somewhat more interest to different parts of the University than previously and moves were afoot to make this interest more co-ordinated:

There's been a certain synergy with changes for instance in Careers Destinations, because the people there have been doing a lot more outreach and doing much more proactive contacting of employers. There seemed to be a general interest in a whole range of places to do more externally facing work. ... I think there has been a cultural change but I wouldn't say that's been driven by the project but I think it's happened along in parallel with it and I think it is entirely consistent with it (EEI team member).

One Steering Group member described how Careers Destinations fostered activities with employers through internships, speed networking sessions between students and employers in particular sectors, bringing in employers as guest lecturers, and employer sponsorship of events.

Certain aspects of the University culture favoured innovation and enterprise:

I mean I guess this university has quite an entrepreneurial culture and a lot of enterprise activity goes on, so a lot of people have contacts with small and larger businesses locally and regionally, so we're ready to tap into a lot of the workforce that's out there. Because we have lots of spin-out companies where we can go.

You know I think we're up for change and up for trying things out and up for, you know we have a very devolved structure and people are quite happy to make decisions locally and say yeah we had a go. (Steering Group member)

It was suggested that the University Strategic Research Groups which work across Schools on major research foci, were a positive tool, encouraging the kind of linkages the EEI was promoting.

The USRGs I think are a brilliant vehicle, I think they have phenomenal potential and I hope very much that certainly the Energy USRG brings together some interesting people. It's mostly focused on research projects and reporting of that, but I think that that should just be the tip of the iceberg. (Business Fellow)

3.1.2 Challenges for the Employer Engagement Initiative

On the other hand, the University structures, processes and culture were sometimes a barrier to the EEI.

During the period of the Initiative, the University had 20 Schools which each had a considerable degree of autonomy, making it difficult to implement changes co-ordinated at the University level. Several interviewees mentioned such difficulties, although two especially stressed that “coherence” in approach rather than “conformity” and “centralisation” were important in any changes that might be made in future.

Pursuing non-standard processes within the University was hard. For example, recruitment of the external Business Fellows was difficult because the bureaucratic requirements such as job specifications and job description were non-standard, as was the contract, so organising the recruitment process was more time-consuming than for a typical University contract.

Communication was problematic at a number of levels. Communication within a large organisation was challenging. At a basic level, making sure that people knew about the Initiative and were able to interact with requests for information or assistance was difficult. As one Steering Group member reported:

So I think it's not really well-known as an initiative and so there's something around the communication of that ... I think there's confusion about what it is, who's involved and I think that's for people who are genuinely interested in this stuff, but for the wider population the chances are they don't know anything about it.

When the EEI team was trying to find out information about University activities relevant to employer engagement, it was challenging. As one member of the EEI team reported:

I think the communication and the lack of institutional knowledge has been a huge inhibitor ... if you want to do anything that is ...not normal practice... you have to start from scratch. We don't teach design per se. Who is interested in design, right, what do I have to do? I have to get XX to go through the website, I have to get XX to do a search. If I want to think of who does human factors degrees ...in their degree programmes, I have to get XX to do a trawl through the student handbooks. We don't make it easy for ourselves to find out what we're doing.

It was sometimes problematic in terms of finding out whether activities within the University indicated that they were part of an official policy direction or were part of more informal arrangements, making for confusion in knowing how to set about implementing new activities:

The difficulty within a big university like Southampton is there are all sorts of things going on and you can't really tell whether it's an institutional direction or it's a workaround. And there are lots of good work arounds. (Business Fellow)

Communication between different parts of the University interested in employer engagement was also sometimes problematic. At times, this was because of the general complexity, busyness and diffusion of a large organisation and the individuals within it. Interviewees were sometimes unsure if someone else had not made sufficient effort to set up channels of communication or whether someone else in their part of the organisation had rebuffed attempts at regular communication or whether people, including themselves, were just too busy to follow through on communication. At other times, specific units and individuals were protective of their contacts with employers and somewhat reluctant to share those.

He said he had loads of contacts but he wouldn't or wasn't going to share them with anybody in case they messed them up for him (Business Fellow)

People who are very prominent in the fields that I am working on engaging with will speak to me to a point and then back off because they don't want to share contacts, they feel it might threaten their existing relationship. (Steering Group member)

At times, such cautiousness may have involved commercial confidentiality, but at other times it was protectiveness of the relationship:

I think they [the Business Fellows] were struggling with the fact they didn't have the contacts to do that at that time and I think they wanted access to my contacts and maybe I was a little resistant because I've got relationships with those people. (R&IS representative)

In order to share contacts in what may be sensitive and personally productive relationships, there has to be a high degree of trust in the integrity and sensitivity of those to whom the contact details were being given. This degree of trust requires time, effort and a developing track record to develop. For people on short-term contracts such trust is therefore difficult to achieve.

Getting messages passed on about the Initiative was hard. In order to reach individual members of the University, as one member of the EEL team reported:

You have to rely on messages being passed on and in my experience they don't get passed on. ... We don't make it easy for ourselves to communicate, you know, staff communication in *Voice* [university magazine], *Sussed* [university information portal], that's it, email. I hardly ever look at the notices on *Sussed*. I generally read my emails but not always. I never read *eVoice* so then what do you do? How do you get a message out? How do you alert staff to what is happening? What always happens I think is you rely on the people you know or the people who know people you know and you generate your own informal network. And that has been the most effective way.

Communication between members of the broader EEL team was also challenging. Many people only worked part-time on the project. Regular meetings could take up a large chunk of their time on the project if they happened too frequently. Many members of the broader team were not co-located making informal communication less likely:

Having ourselves dispersed has militated a little bit against that team-building side. (Business Fellow)

Communication outside the University was also challenging. The complexity of information available was confusing for those external to the University, trying to find their way around the University offer. One Steering Group member said that:

The university isn't a good base from which to engage with employers. It has all the ingredients, the fundamentals, all the intellectual knowledge, it's a hugely valuable resource in the university. How to access it, and this has come up at steering groups as well, this business of how does somebody come and find the university, where's your front door as it were.

Communication could also sometimes be difficult as the players involved in Employer Engagement – academics, Business Fellows, employer representatives – had different expectations, ways of working, and language for expressing these. Such differences in language and expectations is recognised in the wider literature (e.g. Bolden and Petrov 2008).

3.1.3 Achievements and limitations

A business-education gateway

The EEI team has been working with R&IS to develop the University's virtual Gateway by making it easier for business to access information about the University. As well as enhancing presentation of the existing CPD offer, the team has assisted with an analysis of competitor websites.

As regards the physical Gateway, the University negotiated funding with HEFCE for three high quality, easily bookable spaces for executive training, or where employers could meet and interact in the University (at the Winchester School of Art, National Oceanography Centre and on the Highfield Campus). The EEI team has been actively involved in the planning and negotiation within the University for these spaces, which should be completed by summer 2011, and are intended as places where employers can meet and interact with staff in the University. They will be accessible, and offer flexible training and meeting space with high quality audio-visual and WIFI capability. The EEI Director is closely involved in the developments at NOC and Highfield. Bolden et al. (2010) mentioned that the use of such spaces for employers was used by one institution in their study in order to encourage employers to get used to visiting the campus and to think of the University when commissioning training or thinking about research or consultancy. Connor and Hirsh (2008) mentioned the importance of "making it easier for employers to find out what HE can offer through: better marketing, having points of contact that employers can find easily at the centre and at the subject/departmental level, and encouraging employers to meet each other and HE staff informally on shared interests" (p.6).

Springboards?

Various events and meetings in connection with the maritime and energy sectors have taken place, as well as the extensive mapping exercise described in the next section.

Many external (to the University) contacts have been made and much relationship building has happened through the activities of the EEI team, including the project directors, the Business Fellow co-ordinator and the Business Fellows. Some contacts have gone on to lead to working arrangements while others have had a less tangible outcome. The following examples are illustrative.

Many contacts were made with professional associations and major companies in the course of the Initiative. The EEI supported the development of a South Coast Design Forum (SCDF) in Southampton. The Initiative hosted a public presentation by the Chair of the SCDF, Wayne Hemingway, to help launch the Southampton Branch and co-organised the official launch on the Queen Mary 2 with a variety of regional and business representatives. It also facilitated collaborations between the University and the design community, by ensuring continued representation at SCDF meetings and events, and by facilitating a meeting between the Head of Winchester School of Art and the SCDF to discuss opportunities for students and other collaborations. Business Fellows have sat on the Steering Committee of the South Coast Design Forum, representing the University. The Forum is a new organisation and the EEI has tried to build relationships with the design community through it. The EEI was involved in its launch in 2009 and has been trying to support events with Careers Destinations and a variety of Schools within the University.

An R&IS member described how an event involving the London Technology Network [a quango organisation to foster industry academic relations], hosted by R&IS, had enabled EEI Business Fellows to meet academics involved in outward-facing activities. However, he did not know if any tangible outcome had emerged from that event.

A considerable amount of effort went into building relationships with different parts of the energy and maritime sectors. The maritime sector, especially wind energy, is a large, growing and active sector as yet without well developed structures and traditions for CPD. One Business Fellow estimated that:

As the industry grows it will start to dominate the maritime sector and if it isn't already it will become bigger than fisheries. It will become bigger than oil and gas. So it's a vibrant area, clearly with market potential.

He described how the University in a negotiated, ongoing process, was interacting with the relevant professional bodies and companies at different levels of development, consultancy and CPD in what is a complex, competitive market. The University was effectively trying to position itself to be able to take advantage of any opportunities arising where it could offer services and courses to meet the needs of these external organisations. In this type of contact, where Business Fellows internal to the University were talking to employers, they were using existing contacts but instead of just talking to the contacts about research or unaccredited CPD, they were talking about postgraduate, accredited CPD.

Bolden et al. (2010) mentioned this type of interaction where multiple purpose conversations between a University and an employer led to a more integrated relationship between the two.

One member of R&IS articulated the general value of the type of networking going on:

I think a lot of the value of what these initiatives can do it is around network building, making people aware of what everyone else does, both inside the university and what organisations outside are interested in, so we just shared bits of knowledge. You might want to be aware that I'm dealing with this, this meets this academic is working with this company.

One Business Fellow articulated how contacts made in connection with the EEI had worked for his unit:

It's raising the awareness. The sort of broader scale of impact effect of a greater relationship between employers and the university, I suppose just internally within Geodata we can say that some of the people we've met through this process have gone on to become clients or people that we're working with, so there's definitely a value-added that's been gained from that, but that is a broader scale, as I said, it's a broader scale impact.

One Business Fellow described attending meetings of the University Strategic Research Group on Energy and was able to insert a slide about M level courses into a general presentation disseminated by members of the group to companies.

Having an active director of the EEI enabled multiple contacts to be made across the University between people who might not usually encounter one another, as a member of the Steering Group articulated:

The other thing that Mary as the project director has been doing, which is fantastic, is getting completely out and about across the University and meeting various people so you know one day she's in Maritime and the next minute she's talking to somebody else then she's talking to the South Coast Design Forum and various things, so as an agent of making connections I

hope that she's been, I mean I don't know how you would measure effectiveness, but she's certainly been doing it in terms of connecting people, and a lot of it is often allowing, it's having that person who moves between all the various sites and can put the pieces together.

In concrete terms, this had enabled a member of one school in the University which had experience in work-based learning (WBL), Health Sciences, to talk to another school, Engineering, where the introduction of WBL mentors and their training was being planned. Contacts between various academics in different schools had also specifically been enabled. The EEI director explained how:

I've enabled a bit of cross-fertilisation that otherwise wouldn't have happened and which I hope has saved time... rather than people reinventing the wheel.

That hasn't actually thrown anything up as yet in terms of tangible outcomes but it may do something in the future, you know, some of these things have a very slow burn.

Awareness raising of employer engagement within the University was another useful function of the EEI. Many people in the University are engaged in activities which can be classified as employer engagement, but do not think of it in those terms or think how it might link to other activities:

That's part of the legacy I suppose of the project, opening the network of people plugging employer engagement and making everybody aware of it does go on to quite a large extent in the university. There's a huge amount of employer engagement but it's not necessarily branded and badged as employer engagement, it just goes on as part of other roles. (Business Fellow)

It's almost really like starting a debate about the role of external engagement at the university. ... I think the Employer Engagement Initiative has been successful as far as raising their awareness really because more or less everyone got involved, you know the Business Fellows and Mary and everybody else you know have always had that sort of agenda of reminding people of you know the importance of it and why it's relevant. (Business Fellow)

One member of the Steering Group thought that the EEI was feeding into a cultural change in the University:

When you have a project like this when you're actually going out, talking with people, talking with people in schools, you are opening eyes, you are challenging the current status quo, why it is like that, what might need to be changed to enable us to get to a different position. And so I think in its own way it is contributing to some of the groundswell that will be leading to a change in culture across the university. It's not doing it by itself, but it is an additional dimension in that process.

What the eventual outcomes of much of the networking will be is unclear, especially given the time-limited nature of the Initiative, but some has clearly already led to specific activity. The interviewees above are describing the development of various different processes as a direct result of the EEI: general awareness raising within the University; awareness raising of needs and interests external to the University; specific interactions between particular University units and employers and sector representatives; adding on CPD discussions to existing discussions between the University and employers about other aspects of University business; and a contribution to cultural change in the University. Connor and Hirsh (2008) in their study of the articulation between employers and higher education emphasised the importance of developing relationships, and of building trust and respect when developing employer engagement.

The EEI engaged actively in communication about employer engagement across the University. Originally, in response to comments made in Phase 1 of the evaluation, a communications plan was drawn up and updated periodically. See Appendix F for the April 2010 version.

Audit and mapping activities

There were three extensive audit and mapping activities carried out during the Initiative.

The extensive audit of existing flexible postgraduate provision in the University, carried out early in the Initiative and described in the Phase 1 evaluation report and necessary in the absence of an effective system of recording such provision in the University, provided an essential starting point in that it gave an overall picture of what was happening in the University and how some EEI activities could be focused. It has also fed into the recent review of postgraduate taught provision in the University, led by Professors Steve Ward and Graham Moon.

Additionally, one of the Geodata Business Fellow team carried out an evaluation of University activity within the maritime sector:

You can't start saying what it should do in future if we don't know what it's doing currently and we don't know who the key players are... we presented to the steering group meeting what we have been doing on the evaluation of Masters and what modules are run within this university and what is being run across all other universities in the UK, so that we can see what our market is. We're trying to enhance the student numbers and the industry engagement with Masters level in a competitive environment and that competitive environment is largely with other universities in the UK, so we need to know what they are doing in order to judge what Southampton is and can offer and potentially who we might collaborate with. (Business Fellow)

In the second year of the Initiative, one of the Business Fellows (Roberta Comunian) conducted a project mapping out network relationships in the Maritime University Strategic Research Group between people within the University and also external employers. This has been perceived as useful in terms of: generating knowledge of a network in a complex organisation; providing a template for how future investigations could be conducted on other networks; providing an internal University communication tool; and helping to assess the functioning of a strategic research group. As one Steering Group member said:

The work that Roberta has been doing in terms of her network mapping, which again ties in to the types of things you need to do if you do anything around how do you do anything in a complex adaptive organisation, having a knowledge of those networks is vitally important, so I think the work that Roberta has been doing for us is and will prove to be vitally important to us

The EEI director described the methodology and the potential contribution:

a brilliantly simple methodology but a highly interesting tool in terms of mapping relationships and finding out about strengths of relationships and then if you do it over time you can very easily build up a picture. So we certainly can't claim the credit for inventing the methodology, but Roberta would not have been able to do that work if it hadn't been funded through us and certainly she wouldn't have been able to get to the people who have now seen it and thought "Ooh this is really good, this is really useful and this could tell us a lot". And in fact some of my colleagues here are very interested in using it on all sorts of different levels to look at relationships, relationships between researchers within schools or between schools or whatever.

The EEI director explained how the mapping exercise had initially been assessed as useful:

We went to speak to [the head of the Maritime USRG] to present her [Roberta's] idea to him, ... We went and showed him what we were up to, or what Roberta was basically promoting and [suggested]... it could be something that he could do now and then in a years time to see if USRG had had any impact on internal relationships. It's something that we can use to gauge which are the most important companies or organisations that we're engaging with and you can use it as an internal communications tool to support the USRG but also to talk about the Employer Engagement project so it hits a number of buttons. And [the head] was really taken with it. He really liked the social network analysis diagrams and could immediately see that it could be of use to him. So he was very, very supportive of it.

The results were presented at an early stage to a group of research and careers staff, and then to some Early Career Researchers (a group who were highlighted as having much to gain from the USRG if learning from senior staff about collaborations were facilitated). Potentially, such network analysis could be used in other parts of the University and, indeed, in other institutions, although it would require the input of resources in order to fund it. It could be used to look at how relationships with business function. The EEI team plan to capture a presentation by Roberta Comunian on video in order to share the findings more widely across the University. The report arising from this project is available at Appendix H. It aims to inform institutional strategies and procedures, in terms of:

1. how the institution can best coordinate, support and maximise the benefit from our engagement with employers;
2. how the University can best enhance its research agenda and add value to existing collaborations, including CPD opportunities; and
3. identifying the appropriate support structures and procedures to facilitate employer responsive provision, including means of delivery.
(Comunian 2010, p.4)

The report provides a substantial and extensive analysis of the functioning one of the University Strategic Research Groups and the implications for various aspects of the University's interaction with employers in the Maritime Sector.

Understandings of what is required by employers

Steering Group members suggested that as a result of the EEI, the University had a greater understanding of how to engage with employers. The Initiative contributed knowledge through its investigations about how the market in the specific sectors focused on in the Initiative worked. This enabled gaps in provision to be located. The Initiative started by investigating demand for CPD among local energy companies, but these turned out to be mainly small companies without sufficient resources to pay for employee CPD. The Initiative then moved to talking to professional institutes, but they were uninterested in Masters level provision. Large companies were located elsewhere in the UK. Eventually, the Initiative found that:

Actually the big gap in the market in terms of skills knowledge understanding is very much in large employers who will have to use and embrace alternative energy.

Much useful intelligence like this was gleaned, but did not lead to concrete outcomes within the two years of the project. To some extent the intelligence was captured in contact reports drawn up by EEI team members and monthly progress reports during the Initiative. The contact reports recorded details about contacts made, including outcomes and actions to be taken. The progress reports recorded foci, achievements, progress and problems in the previous month as well as plans for the next month. Templates for these reports are available at Appendix J.

However, some expressed doubts about the extent to which the University had, after the Initiative, a greater grasp of what flexible learning was required by employers and what the University was interested in offering:

The bit that I haven't got any greater clarity on and maybe other people have is so what's the model that businesses want, what would work for them and where are the academics who are interested in developing modules that would align to those new models of delivery? And that I don't think we've got but maybe that was you know within the timescales maybe that was too much to ask, I don't know. (Steering Group member)

Another Steering Group member was sceptical about levels of demand for what the University could offer:

We've done what we said we'd do, but I think it's not leading me to believe that this approach can deliver sizeable amounts of students to us for Masters level provision. ... we've had the industry people on the board [but] I have not heard those people produce an identified description of a product that they want us to provide, and I think that's a really difficult one because we're not turning down people saying "Oh we don't do solar physics or whatever", we're just not hearing what they want and they're not articulating what they want.

It was sometimes unclear exactly what the level of demand was for courses the University might offer. It is not straightforward to assess how much demand there might be out in the market for courses which do not yet exist, especially given the fast-changing and deteriorating economic environment in which this project was working. Additionally, however, investigation of which courses might be viable and popular seemed speculative and instinctive, rather than involving careful and thorough market research.

Connor and Hirsh (2008) confirmed the difficulty of assessing demand for this type of employer engagement, even in more prosperous economic times, suggesting that employers were generally more likely to be interested in engagement in the form of recruiting graduates rather than in using universities for training their workforce, apart from in limited cases. They also described the relatively limited nature of employer demand for university-led training, as distinct from private training providers. Citing a Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey by HEFCE (HEBCIS 2007), they estimated that "businesses spend at least £400 million annually at UK universities on CPD ... and other short courses training, but... this pales into insignificance when the total spending by businesses on external training at all levels is considered (over £38 bn in England)", with £5.5bn of this thought potentially accessible to higher education institutions (p.11). Such estimates are highly speculative.

An employer engagement framework

Developments within the University are encouraging a move towards a more co-ordinated approach to employer engagement. The EEI has contributed to these developments. A Corporate Relationship Strategy, focused on relationships with large companies, is being developed by R&IS with Student Services. The focus on large employers is supported by Connor and Hirsh's (2008) report which reports that "smaller firms are less likely to invest in any training than larger ones, and where they do, they exhibit a preference for shorter-duration informal training over the more formal, qualifications-based course which HE offers. This tends to reflect the special challenges many face (short-term/survival focus, opportunity-cost barriers)" (p.11). Careers Destinations, the careers and outreach service within the University, is developing a strategy focused on *Global Graduates*. This addresses issues related to graduate recruitment, employability and placements.

3.2 Aim 2 Changes to academic processes to enable flexible delivery of M level education

3.2.1 Factors assisting the Employer Engagement Initiative

There were many 'workarounds' already in existence in the University for pre-existing flexible courses, suggesting a means by which new flexibly delivered courses could have been run in the University on a small scale until broader changes are implemented. As one Steering Group member suggested:

We've just got to get on and do it. And this university's pretty good for that, you know we don't put huge obstacles in the way of things, you know we're very good at workarounds.

3.2.2 Challenges for the Employer Engagement Initiative

Registration, financial and IT systems

The IT and other support systems were often not supportive of the kind of flexible learning the EEI wanted to encourage. This was commented on extensively in the Phase 1 report. Some examples are that the students can usually only register for complete degree programmes, usually within one school, rather than individual units, apart from using resource-intensive registration and fees 'workarounds':

I mean the classic example at the moment... there is no clear linkage between our student records system and finance system to be able to charge an individual student for a module of study. The University is still very much focused that you are a full-time student or if you are a part-time student you're spending half of your time with the university. Now part of the focus at national level with HEFCE, but also the Employer Engagement Initiative, is to enable individuals to do one or two modules a year. Our systems at the moment are not geared up to be able to do that so everything we do is by manual workarounds. (Steering Group member)

Financial arrangements within the University were not always favourable to encouraging flexible learning. Firstly, payment for single modules was difficult. Secondly, interviewees argued that the University's financial system encouraged Schools to work in competition, rather than co-operate. This made the provision of an open Masters programme, where different elements would be provided by different Schools, a demanding goal. The University system during the period of the Initiative was that schools had to pay the University a tax for each student registered. This tax was not adjusted fractionally for students taking only one or two modules, a disincentive for schools to accept such registrations. Thirdly, the University could only accept payment for courses by cheque, and not by credit card or online. Fourthly, the University did not have financial systems in place to accept contributions in kind from employers for courses, one option suggested to enable employers to pay for employees to study. One Steering Group member explained:

I mean the example that we've had quite a bit of discussion about recently is that employers have said, "Look, you know, it's much more difficult for us to come up with cash, OK, but if we could do some stuff that would potentially pay for some of the stuff by payment in kind or payment in some other non-cash form it would be very beneficial", [but the university has responded with saying] the university doesn't have any way to deal with non-financial contributions coming in and yes we know that it occurs but we don't do it and maybe in a year or two we'll try to put it on our computer systems to try to figure out – well maybe in a year or two we'll put it on the list of things that we might want to do.

Bolden *et al.* (2010) mentioned the requirement for flexible financial arrangements for employer engagement as often causing difficulties in higher education institutions.

Without changes in such systems, it was difficult to achieve the type of flexible learning that the EEI envisaged although, as a Steering Group member pointed out, unless there was a large-scale demand for such learning the lack of flexibility was not really a problem as small-scale demand could be addressed by workarounds.

Quality assurance systems

The University requires that quality assurance procedures be followed for all credit-bearing courses it offers. This posed two potential difficulties for the EEI. Firstly, the procedures take time (although opinions varied about whether length of time was a real or imagined problem, and possibly practice varies according to school). One EEI team member explained this issue as follows:

One of the issues for EEI is to develop more flexible modes of delivery. We [the university] are probably somewhat undeveloped in QA systems... we might have to be responsive to needs from employers. They don't want to wait a year while we go through our standard QA processes. The question is how can we make our systems nice and responsive and support schools during development and get things up and running speedily.

Secondly, quality assurance procedures are usually arranged for traditional programmes and units, delivered in conventional ways and with ownership in one University school, whereas the EEI was interested in flexible types of learning, delivered flexibly and perhaps straddling more than one school. As an EEI team member explained:

So for example, it is quite easy for a school to get a module validated or accredited or using its own school mechanisms as long as a module is part of a pre-existing programme. But for free-standing modules or clusters that might be credit-bearing or that may be made available to employers, things start getting more difficult. There are issues around different modes of delivery. We are not heavily into distance learning or flexible modes of delivery, for example. Even part-time provision, we don't major in it. We have to have appropriate systems if we move in that direction – admin systems and QA to make sure you can offer a good student experience in line with rest of provision.

3.2.3 Achievements and limitations

Administrative changes

EEI team members had extensive discussions with members of professional services about the administrative arrangements in the University as they related to flexible provision of courses. This culminated in preparing a paper, to put before the Student and Academic Administration Board, which made the business case for a more flexible student registration process, rather than requiring each student to sign up for an entire programme. Changes to University processes entail major infrastructure changes, as highlighted in the Phase 1 EEI evaluation report. The changes have been agreed, but the process requires a long lead-in period before University resources become available to implement them and they will happen after the EEI has finished. The EEI was also influential in getting approval through the usual University processes for regulations for credit accumulation in a modular structure for stand-alone Masters, instead of having Masters degrees based entirely within one school.

Given that the Initiative was only funded for two years, the delay inherent in major administrative/IT adjustments happening, made it difficult to achieve certain types of change, although many questions were raised within the University and, given other influences, certain changes suggested by the EEI may happen in due course, partly as a result of the Initiative. The University may have had to change some of these structures, processes and practices anyway in order to move in the direction it wants to go, and the EEI has been helpful in “adding momentum to the need to do that”, although opinions varied about how much weight the Initiative had had in the melting pot of the various influences.

Technology Enhanced Learning Guide

The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Guide, a resource for academics seeking to develop e-learning provision, is one concrete outcome of the Initiative. These guidelines offer principles to follow, identify key issues for planning and managing TEL projects, seek to encourage academic engagement in TEL, and provide details of internal and external people and organisations to contact about proposed projects.

A major component is principles – knowing who to talk to, knowing what questions to ask. Knowing what resources out there is important, for example, JISC. By talking to these, people will get an idea of what pitfalls to avoid. (EEI team member)

Previously, academics wanting to set up an online course had to start with very little guidance or support within the University about a range of issues specific to TEL such as e-learning quality issues, choosing technical tools, facilitating effective TEL teams and pedagogic implications as the academic priority.

The guidelines are also potentially a model for how other curriculum matters could be addressed, as a member of the EEI team explained:

Maybe it will provide a blueprint for other developmental work sort of within the curriculum, under the curriculum umbrella,. Because if we want to do work-based learning or something like that we need to maybe think about a similar sort of thing, so that you can see at a glance what are the QA issues, what are the things that I have to do, who is already doing it, and how can I, you know, how can I take this forward.

The Guidelines are available at Appendix L or online at:
www.southampton.ac.uk/lateu/institutional_development/TEL/TEL_guide.html

Quality assurance developments

The EEI team investigated opportunities for greater quality assurance flexibility in advance of a new course actually appearing, and a paper was produced on available options. See Appendix G for a copy of the paper. This was to be discussed at the appropriate University committee, but given the ongoing University restructuring discussion of the document was delayed until November 2010.

One concrete case of a new course pursued as an exemplar proved unsuitable as a ‘guinea pig’, as it could more easily be approved within an existing school programme with minor modifications to existing documentation. However, a whole new programme would be more complicated, as one EEI team member explained:

There are a whole raft of different issues which would need to be addressed. If it were Work-Based Learning, students need to have mentors. So what are quality issues around mentoring. That could take a long time to work out. But if we have thought of these things in advance and have found out what best practice is, we don’t need to reinvent wheel.

The EEI team was able to draw on an existing WBL module in the University for use in the draft quality assurance paper. Possibilities investigated were off-the-peg quality assurance documents for units, held probably by a central department such as LATEU, which could be easily and speedily adapted to specific courses and which did not need to be held by a specific school. Another idea was that instead of depending on standing committees which only meet three times a year to approve courses, it would be possible to establish a sub-group and/or project-specific sub-groups with expertise in flexible delivery courses which might be able to act more swiftly. However, in the absence of a concrete course to pilot through a flexible quality assurance system, it was hard to establish exactly what would happen. Matters were complicated by the institutional reorganisation taking place which made it unclear how existing policies and practices on quality assurance would function in the future. The hope was that a space could be created within the new faculty structure for discussions along the lines envisaged in the draft quality assurance documents drawn up.

Inputs into the Curriculum Innovation Programme

There was a major review of the curriculum, the Curriculum Innovation Programme (CIP), within the University ongoing throughout the second part of the EEI. The EEI was able to make useful contributions to two sub-sections of this review: postgraduate taught courses (PGT), and continuing professional development (CPD). The University wants to increase numbers of postgraduate taught students and the EEI team was able to contribute large amounts of information about changing markets for courses and issues which needed to be thought about. In the CPD review, as the EEI director explained:

I've been feeding in as much as I can from experience from what we've learnt over the last couple of years in terms of where we might be able to make headway, what the messages are coming back from industry, what our weaknesses are, because what we've done is we've set up a lot of new, I think some of them you can classify them as new relationships with networks or individuals, and we've been generating more feedback from them, or different feedback. We've been asking questions that perhaps weren't asked before and that has helped us shape our knowledge and shape our thinking.

Similarly, introducing Geodata members who have considerable CPD experience to the Curriculum Innovation Programme meetings enabled useful contributions to be made by people who are more used to acting as consultants than academic staff.

The EEI may contribute to future developments in the University. For example, work done in the EEI on CPD and its management and financing, may 'underpin' a University-wide CPD unit should the current curriculum review process in the University decide to move in that direction. This is similarly true for online delivery through the TEL Guidelines.

The Initiative also assisted in focusing discussion on how to align the future curriculum and related administrative systems with flexible learning needs:

It has provided an internal focus both for discussions to get people to engage more widely in what our curriculum is trying to do and how the needs of a variety of stakeholders, one of which is the employers, can be taken on board for us to involve our curriculum more into the future and how our curriculum support administrative systems might need to change to become less of a barrier. (Steering Group member)

Financial matters

The EEI has also provided various learning opportunities related to funding models:

I think what the Initiative has done for us so far, it has provided evidence to ourselves but I think also in some areas to HEFCE itself of the complexity in this area, both in terms of funding and the issues to do with funding and co-funding and a number of issues in and around the HEFCE funding models that may or may not act as an incentive to individuals to get engaged in higher education in a way that HEFCE would be prepared to fund. (Steering Group member)

There has also been some discussion between the EEI team and University accountants on actual costs behind funding models for courses in order to enable more realistic discussions with employers about their contribution to course costs.

HE is run on assumed costs not on real costs and when you're talking to business you have to be able to say to them that's what it costs us, that's where we can negotiate, that is the point beyond which we can't go. (EEI team member)

The EEI has also been responsible for doing work in conjunction with the fees office which identifies patterns of student registration with regard to those who are funded by employers in terms of numbers and names of the employers.

As none of the pilot Masters courses have come to fruition yet, it has not been possible to experiment concretely with funding models.

The EEI started off discussions about contributions in kind from employers, but to do something about this would entail extra work for the finance department at a time when staff numbers are being cut. A cover note explaining developments so far is available at Appendix J.

3.3 Aim 3 Pilot projects

In the EEI bid, it was planned that there would be three pilot projects at M level to test out with regard to content, flexible delivery and new funding mechanisms with respect to WBL (Nursing: Leadership Capacity Building), e-distance learning (Environmental Health), and Credit-Accumulation (Cross School Masters in Professional Development). Two of these pilot projects proved unworkable. NHS funding had been withdrawn, removing the viability of the Nursing WBL proposal. The champion of the cross-school, open Masters pilot in the School of Management retired and interest in this course diminished as other priorities came to the fore, although there are proposals in the Curriculum Innovation Programme to enable the kind of flexibility and choice implied in the Management programme, and if this leads to sufficient change at the institutional level (in finance, registration and so on), it could lead to a range of employer-responsive opportunities.

A potential alternative pilot, an Energy Certificate, (described on p.26-26) was identified. This was perceived to have potential for being delivered in an e-learning format. Throughout the Initiative, the EEI team tried to respond to clear indications of enthusiasm and opportunities which offered realistic pathways to achieving the overall aims of the project. There has also been exploration of flexible delivery of an undergraduate programme as the core professional training within an international company with a local headquarters.

3.3.1 Factors assisting the Employer Engagement Initiative

Already existing in the University were M level courses which were flexibly delivered. Two examples where those involved exchanged information with the EEI were an M level WBL module in the School of Health Sciences and an MSc in Marine Technology in the School of Engineering Sciences.

The WBL module, offered either as a stand-alone course or as part of one of several Masters programmes, offered expertise to the EEI in mentoring, study days at the University, assessment, quality assurance and charging. The majority of students on this module are funded by Strategic Health Authorities in the National Health Service or hospital trusts or General Practitioner surgeries, but a small number come, for example, from the armed forces or other universities to take the Southampton WBL module as an option. Some students are recruited nationally, rather than locally.

The MSc in Marine Technology is an innovative Masters programme set up ten years ago and run by a consortium of several universities with 30 modules in total, taught in different locations, and set up originally with £457,769 of funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. The programme offered the EEI expertise in the provision of flexible delivery of a qualification at different levels: Certificate, Diploma and Masters, based on a broad choice of modules. Sometimes students

take a module as a stand-alone CPD opportunity. As a programme, students who are working full-time must complete ten modules plus a dissertation. Each module takes about three and a half months and requires a pre-school assignment based on material delivered via a Blackboard site from Newcastle University, an intensive week of lectures and demonstrations as well as an examination at a university location, and a post-school assignment. The Masters programme offers graduation from the university where the student does their final project, although this project is based in the workplace. Students are recruited both nationally and internationally. The MSc took nearly five years to get all the modules working fully. Initially, scholarships were available, but eventually these ran out and now the students are partly self-funded and partly funded by their employers. There are currently 130 students in the scheme. Numbers have increased with the recession, presumably as people seek to upgrade their knowledge and qualifications. This is a sustainable course now, surviving without external funding. It offered the EEI expertise in various aspects of programme development, administration and marketing. The programme is continuing to diversify its offer at the moment, so remains a powerful and relevant model.

Additionally, the University already had many employers paying directly for their students to study on University courses. In 2009/10, there were 147 employers paying for 352 students to study on University courses. This figure does not include students paying for their own courses, but claiming back from their employers. This indicates existing experience of dealing with employers and the capability of the University to provide courses of interest to employers.

3.3.2 Challenges for the Employer Engagement Initiative

The University of Southampton is largely set up as a university using traditional face-to-face teaching methods and has had consistently high demand for places from traditional (i.e. full-time or half-time, on campus) students. The drivers to seek out new students are limited, especially as internal capacity for accommodating more students is limited. The alignment of many universities to young, full-time students is recognised in the broader literature (e.g. Bolden and Petrov 2008). In the case of online and distance courses, the University does not have the capacity, beyond small pockets of activity, for designing a substantive number of consistently-designed online courses. This would require significant investment in learning design and e-learning production/support resources. The development of online resources is a demanding and specialist activity which requires a major strategic commitment.

In many cases, potential new flexible courses looked possible, but these were thwarted in a number of different ways. Sometimes, the external financial situation prevented development and in other cases one or other internal factors intervened. Sometimes, University processes were not helpful, as with University credit transfer arrangements. In other cases, an individual essential to driving through a change became unavailable through retirement or time restrictions.

3.3.3 Achievements and limitations

The Initiative illustrated clearly that, without proper support in place when developing flexible learning in the shape of online delivery, such development would be unlikely to succeed:

Part of the learning is that we now have at least one example, well we have a couple of examples of trying to develop online materials and that shows that actually unless you have a proper funding model... which enables staff to spend time and encourages staff to spend time on it and rewards them for spending time on it, then you probably won't get very far. (EEI team member)

Below are two examples of developments taking place as a result of the EEI. In both cases, the Business Fellow Co-ordinator (Business Manager), Madeline Paterson, was able to make strong contributions in her facilitative role.

MSc in Environmental Health

As this report was being written, the EEI was funding the development of a new Postgraduate Certificate in Environmental Health. This provision should articulate with other relevant courses, such as an M Level Public Health Programme, offering a series of pathways for an individual to attain a full Masters, if desired. As well as directly offering financial and logistical support for the postgraduate certificate, the EEI team have been supporting and promoting articulation of these pathways.

Development of this certificate drew on support from and co-operation with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, originally expressed in a letter submitted with the bid. This Environmental Health course was to be delivered as a distance/online programme to enable individuals to qualify as Environmental Health professionals, or existing professionals to take modules as CPD. This will be a major achievement for the EEI. Development of the course was much delayed because of lack of academic staff time and the unavailability of suitable learning designers/course authors. Finally, three external course authors, each bringing complementary scientific writing and learning design skills, were identified. Additionally, as a member of the EEI team explained:

Ian [Williams, lead on Environmental Health Masters] has a couple of students who are working with him and he's trying to pull in some environmental health people from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health who've said that they would be prepared to work, so it's quite a big complex programme and it's a very different way of working for us in this university, and that wouldn't be happening without the project.

One Steering Group member hoped that the model of this MSc course would illustrate how learning designers might work with subject experts and technology experts to provide an innovative course using learning technology effectively:

What a learning designer does, they look at the entire curriculum, work out what the role of the academic is, what the student needs to do in terms of independent study or guided study etc, and when there needs to be a technological intervention of some sort they then negotiate and perhaps commission people to produce material in a coherent way, in a way that is to certain standards that our delivery systems can deliver and so on. We've got many, many content experts. We have some technology experts. In the university we've got essentially very few people and certainly not available across the university, people that I am calling learning designers. ... I think there might then need to be some type of debate how much of such expertise do we need to have in-house, how much actually buying it in might be the way that we need to do it. But there needs to be a recognition that there is an additional skill mix that is needed to be able to make effective delivery of technology enhanced learning. The one thing this university has always said it's not very good at is a good uptake of technology enhanced learning and I think the reason is because it's never really been thought through and how technology enhanced learning figures within the total learning experience of a student. This is a big area where I think we need more education and learning designers. (Steering Group member)

Such designers will often be freelance and available for this type of work. Many have been associated with the Open University. It is important for such developers to have had practical experience of working alongside academics on course development. At present, the contribution of learning designers is not extensive in the University; rather, it is done by a small number of enthusiastic academics without the benefit of professional support. Expansion of e-learning would benefit from more resources and expertise, including learning media design/production expertise which could ensure modules were produced to a more consistent quality standard with an appropriate level of student support.

The programme for Environmental Health professionals should be a major legacy of the EEI as there is likely to be considerable demand. It might parallel the contribution of the MSc in Marine Technology to the University, a programme set up ten years ago with considerable external support.

Energy certificate

An example of a difficulty in developing online provision is that of conversion of some units from an Energy Masters programme. It was hoped that an online version of some existing modules could be developed from this existing Masters course and be offered at Certificate level. However, this project ran into various problems including lack of academic time, because of competing research and teaching demands, and expertise to bring it to fruition, despite the EEI paying for a consultant and one of the Business Fellows contributing some time. One of the academics involved in this expressed the difficult path he had gone down:

I set out very naively. ... I wish we could have more help – some body or individual as we do not really know what we are doing half the time. Even after course is written, it will have to be updated which will take resource. Someone will have to be online once or twice a week to give online tutorials. You have to look at precedents to find out how it happens. I don't even know if we do this if it will be accepted. ... Is this something the Uni wants us to do. Or not. Or are they agnostic. We just don't know. Are there legal issues which will stop us? We are just forging ahead and hoping at the end there will be an accolade. Perhaps people will say you are bonkers. (Pilot Masters representative)

One member of the EEI team described the situation:

I don't want to be negative. The challenges are the ones you would expect in a Uni where it has a research focus and little or few incentives for academics to engage more in teaching unless it fascinates them – unless it means positive things in terms of their career and pay and so on. Kudos etc.

Additionally, demand for the (non-online) energy course is down somewhat, possibly because of the recession as the students are largely self-funding, providing an additional disincentive to the lecturers to develop the online versions. Despite all these difficulties, by the time of this report, one module had been largely developed and was to be piloted with some existing students.

Undergraduate programme

There has also been exploration of flexible delivery of an undergraduate programme as the core professional training within an international company with a local headquarters. If supported by the employer's Executive Board after a detailed feasibility study and risk analysis, this programme would start in the academic year 2013-14

3.4 Aim 4 Design Centre

The loss of the Faraday Building, intended to provide space for the Design Centre and financed by a repayable grant, was a major early blow to the Initiative when it was designated unsuitable for refurbishment. The unsuitability of the building only became apparent after the funds had been awarded and, despite the best efforts of Pat Maier (then co-director of the project) and others, an alternative space could not be found. This led to the loan being reconfigured, following negotiation with HEFCE, into a smaller capital grant to upgrade other space. Much of the employer support,

expressed in the supporting letters submitted as part of the bid, were related to the Design Centre so its loss was a blow to this source of employer support.

In a new development, the idea of the Design Centre may be revisited in the restructured University by the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and the Environment.

3.5. Other matters

3.5.1 Additional student numbers (ASNs)

The EEI aimed to recruit 60 new M level FTE students on to flexible credit-based courses, co-funded by employers. It had been envisaged that the ASN allocation would be used on the pilot courses described in the original bid. This has proved problematic for three main reasons.

Firstly, suitable courses could not be developed in time, as described elsewhere in this report. The new Environment Health Certificate should recruit from October 2011 on a part-time basis. It is hoped that about ten FTE students will be recruited in the first year (equivalent to 30–50 headcount).

Secondly, ASNs were difficult to use. One ASN equals one full-time equivalent student, which could potentially equal ten people on a relatively small module. In order to get 60 ASNs, the University would need to recruit perhaps 200 or 250 part-time Masters students for a year to do one or two modules in order to reach 60 ASNs. This might work more easily in contexts such as Foundation Courses where there is a large number of students, but is hard to fulfil with a relatively small number of Masters students.

Thirdly, the University does have other groups of students (e.g. Postgraduate Certificates of Education delivered to specialist groups) who may fit the ASN criteria, but it is hard to access the relevant data as it is currently not routinely collected. In future, as an outcome of ongoing work by the relevant administrative teams, supported by the EEI, tracking is likely to become easier.

This picture was complicated by the unclear nature of the funding for ASNs. The funding mechanism was sufficiently complicated that HEFCE had to hold meetings and send out an explanatory memo in Autumn 2009, some years after introducing the funding system. The funding mechanism was not necessarily attractive to academic schools as its complexity is off-putting, and the relatively small amount of funding obtainable from HEFCE (either 50 or 70% of that available for the traditional student) does not compensate for this. At M level with small student cohorts it also translates into relatively small sums even at the programme level. The small amount of HEFCE support is also not easy to use as a selling point with employers. Generally, for the amount of money and for the effort required to demonstrate compliance with the various criteria, the co-funded ASNs were not a great incentive to change practice,

3.5.2 Recording achievements

Achievements from the EEI were recorded in various ways: the six-monthly HEFCE reports, minutes from the Steering Groups, progress reports and contact reports within the team. The HEFCE reports brought together information from the other sources.

3.5.3 Steering Group

The Steering Group was initially a small group of people internal to the University who had met before the funds were received and continued to meet in the absence of the DVC, with the attendant challenges previously mentioned in the early months of the Initiative. Under the leadership of Professor Debra Humphris, the Steering Group was developed and extended and met regularly on a quarterly basis. See the list of Steering Group members in Appendix E.

Views on the usefulness and exact purpose of the Steering Group were mixed, as probably tends to be the case with such groups. There was some ambiguity about whether it was an advisory group or a group that was expected to make decisions. Some Steering Group members felt rather isolated from decision-making, but admitted they did not have much time to follow up on what was for most only one activity among many. Members of the Steering Group had widely differing levels of information about the EEI. Views varied about whether it was useful to have such a wide-ranging group and whether it would have been preferable to have a smaller, more operationally focused group, or whether such a wide-ranging group was appropriate and could have had even more external representatives on it. Another view was that having a Steering Group with senior members of the University on it had been essential and that without having the recognition and contacts such a group gave it, the Initiative would have “floundered” (Steering Group member).

4. Emerging issues

We will now discuss some issues which have emerged during the evaluation that we consider important to evaluating its outcomes and for planning future activities at the University of Southampton or elsewhere. These issues are presented separately in the discussion, but clearly overlap. In this section, we explore interviewees' reflections and draw attention to questions arising.

4.1 Strategic positioning of Employer Engagement in the University

The University of Southampton is a traditional Russell Group university where the major institutional priorities (and successes) have been research (including research involving employers) and traditional full-time students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Questions arise about how much institutional resource in the shape of finance and staff time to invest in employer engagement activities in M level flexible education.

4.1.1 Meso-level institutional aspects of prioritisation

At an institutional level, employer engagement in M level education has to compete with other priorities for institutional resource. To be successful it must show that it can make a useful contribution to the University, financially and in terms of reputation. Interviewees discussed how far the University was committed to employer engagement in M level educational provision; what impact this level of strategic prioritisation had on employers' experiences of engagement with the University; what effect the level of prioritisation had had on the Initiative; and how far the University should be committed to developing this sort of employer engagement.

In general, interviewees felt that employer engagement in M level provision was not a major priority within the institution.

Although there is a lot going on with the outside, as I said the academics are engaged, there is not much recognition of the importance of this engagement and maybe not enough sort of momentum about it. This is not seen as a priority. (Business Fellow)

One external member of the Steering Group commented that:

I just have a general view that maybe lots of people in that [Steering] group have got other priorities.

He wondered how much high level support there was in the University for the Initiative.

For employer engagement involving research, matters were easier in that this was an institutional priority which would be duly rewarded and sanctioned at the individual level and standard procedures were in place for those who wished to follow that path:

There are clear models, there are standard processes for doing it. (R&IS representative)

In terms of effects this level of prioritisation had on employers experience of the University, one concern mentioned was the low level of institutional responsiveness to employer need:

I don't think we have a particularly excellent reputation with our authorities and health and social care providers which you know, to be quite frank, are a very rich source, not just for education but for research for all sorts of things, but with our small and medium sized enterprises either. They won't come to us because we don't deliver on price, we're not quick enough, we're not responsive. I've had a number of occasions where people have said to me "Oh yeah, I did approach someone there, but by the time they got their act together it was too expensive, you know".

...When I first started... I was going out meeting stakeholders, I was doing damage control for most of the time at the beginning you know, saying "No we're not that horrible thing that sits on top of the city, we are actually interested in what you do. We don't just swan in, use your setting for research and swan out again", which is often the perception that we have as a university with local employers. (Pilot Masters representative)

This reflects, at least in part, a lack of strategic prioritisation of such activities as well as financial considerations for a large organisation. The need to be responsive to employer expectations was mentioned by various interviewees in the study by Bolden *et al.* (2010). However, they suggest that employer engagement requires a far more flexible approach than higher education institutions can often offer, given their traditional orientation towards a different market, that of the delivery of full-time undergraduate education.

This low level of institutional prioritisation affected the EEI. One R&IS member described how this had worked:

Now I'm sure if the Employment Engagement Initiative had the ultimate sort of stick to beat people about in it you could make changes that would make it easier but I think it's very difficult because the people responsible for the courses for the delivery are within different constituencies so they [EEI team] have only been able to offer carrots rather than the stick approach and these are very meagre carrots of "Please come along with me and my agenda because what I'm going to tell you is a very, very good thing". They haven't offered any immediate benefits of, "I've got money that could buy out your time to do this and it's going to help you reschedule your lecturers' timescales so we can try and do something in this area in the next six months and if we get only one or two people attend then the institution accepts that's fine, we've started doing this". They've had no sort of substantial carrots like that to try and get their new activity bought into.

Interviewees raised questions about how far the University should prioritise employer engagement for Masters level education, given that there did not seem to be clear, easily accessible demand:

I think we would have to really consider whether this [Employer Engagement] was for us. ... We did take a risk in bidding for this because we deliberately bid it to promote Masters level education. We weren't looking at undergraduate or foundation degrees and I don't think there were any other universities looking to develop Masters level provision so I think that we were always taking a bit of a gamble because where there have been successes and HEFCE pilots, a lot of it is tending to be foundation level, you know, far more basic skills than we would ever want to be engaged with. (Steering Group member)

Is it actually something [the university] wants to do or not, and I don't think there's any middle ground, you either make a strategic decision to do it or you don't. And then we've got to ask ourselves the questions around are we actually best pitched to do it, is this more a new university thing. I mean we're a world class research university. I have no knowledge of the quality of our teaching, I wouldn't want to cast any opinion about that but you know is teaching flexible type courses something that this university wants to do. (R&IS representative)

One interviewee recognised that this type of employer engagement might not be a high priority for the University, but that any activity undertaken should be done properly:

Institutionally I think we are very, very large, we are somewhat traditional and that's partly its beauty. I'm not at all dismissing that, we want to be that. We're not one of the new universities

that often are much better at these things, but they're not so good at other things, you know, so I don't mean to erode the traditions and the ethos of the place, but I do think we are a business in essence and like any other business we have to tout for customers. And that means we have to go out and be competitive. (Pilot Masters representative)

Some thought this need to prioritise could be resolved. One Steering Group member suggested that the University needed to build more deliberately on existing long-running, strategic research relationships with large employers to see if these could be extended to Masters level flexible education provision. He suggested a closer integration of activities between various parts of the University concerned with employer engagement: Careers Destinations, R&IS and LATEU could work more closely together to exploit all potential angles of engagement with an employer to the mutual benefit of both employer and the University.

And we've not yet worked through how that will work, because it's a two-way process, it isn't all just one way, and we need to get clear about how this is going to work. I still feel we've got internal confusion.

Connor and Hirsh (2008) discuss the importance of "genuine collaboration and mutual benefit" (p.5) when working with employers. They also discuss the difficulties most universities have in prioritising employer engagement as regards educational provision, highlighting the difficulties presented by competing agendas and regulatory requirements within universities.

4.1.2 Micro-level individual aspects

These competing institutional priorities played out, often unfavourably, in terms of competing pressures on time and lack of reward in performance and promotion structures at the micro level of the individual academic.

Competing demands on time led to severe problems with the MSc in Environmental Health and the Energy Certificate. The academics involved had to balance many competing demands on their time, making it hard to deliver sufficient academic contribution for the EEI in an effective, timely way.

Many interviewees commented on the pressures on time within the University for individual academics:

There's some glue that's holding those people's shoes down [EEI team] and there must be some factor, some externality that makes it difficult because all the suggestions they come up with are entirely sensible, plausible, it would be a good thing, and I suspect it ... is because loads of people are really, really busy and they haven't got lots of time to invest in making a difference on a new initiative. (R&IS representative)

It's been going slowly, predominantly because I haven't been able to dedicate as much time to it as I would like to. ... To get, well a new module. Basically what I have to do is I have to suggest a new module being attached to the new programme and get it through the School Boards, the different boards that the School or committee that approve it. Now I've spoken to our Deputy Head of the School for Education, who is very supportive and so I know that it's a question of just doing it and seeing you know how we need to manage that, but it's just finding the time and putting it together in that way. ... it would probably take me one evening to do it, I'll just have to find the evening to do it. (Pilot Masters representative)

Not only research, but also teaching could have a high priority in the sense of immediacy for academics:

I think it's known throughout the University that it's a balancing act, what needs to be done, you know, if I have to teach here or I have to deliver a day of teaching next Monday, that has priority

in terms of it being organised than a module that I might deliver in March next year. It's just realities. (Pilot Masters representative)

There tended to be an additive model for staff workloads whereby teaching, research and enterprise responsibilities were added to one another, rather than strategic decisions being made about individual prioritisation.

Pressures to focus on particular aspects had performance management implications which were discouraging to those who might be interested in developing M level courses for employer engagement:

There's a conflict of interest there between the performance indicators that they [academics] are measured against and the target to offer enhanced additional or redevelop courses to better meet a market. [They are] at loggerheads really. So not quite a cultural issue, more a performance issue, which affects the senior staff who might be able to offer courses, so unless you're offering something you've already got and not making changes and just increasing the student numbers on existing courses, you've got an uphill battle to convince people who are supposed to be developing research as their key activity to ask them to develop courses that better meet an industry demand or employer demand. (Business Fellow)

One Business Fellow explained the thinking that might go into an academic's decision about whether to focus on doing research or on developing a new Masters' programme:

The maths aren't great. In terms of developing a new Masters it's very time intensive and you have to get a large number of students on it to have the same income as for example a reasonable sized research grant. I think from an academic's point of view they'd go the research grant route because that also leads the way open to papers and conference proceedings and if you can get one or two grants in that's several years worth of online students.

I think in some subject areas where you could use the same company year on year it's much more favourable, because if you spend a few months developing a course but then have ten or twenty students over a five-year period on it then things start to stack up much better. If the course has to be changed every year or every couple of years content-wise, then there's an ongoing level of effort needed.

An EEI team member reported having a conversation with a senior lecturer who was involved in employer engagement activities in his school about whether he would like to have his time bought out to work as a Business Fellow for part of his workload:

His response was that "if I do this and I accept a half year buy out from you then it takes me away from my day job and it reduces my chances of getting a promotion in the future." Because he saw himself as being judged primarily on research, secondarily on education, and the enterprise business was some kind of you know, way off the mark. ... What am I going to gain from doing employer engagement in this context? Answer, not a lot. (EEI team member)

Without institutional prioritisation, individual academics are likely to prioritise research activities:

I suppose it comes down to priorities and where the University sees its priorities, whether it's delivery of Masters and teaching or as it has been as a research focus, the University is more research focused than short course and Masters focused, and I think that's quite evident in career progression and appointments of people that teaching is nice but research income, papers published, those sorts of things are more important for the general academic.

I guess when the new Deans are in place where their priorities lie. If they say right there's a niche in the market, we need some academics to prioritise their workload into focusing on these areas then that's where it will go, but at the moment most academics see career progression and security come from the research side, so grants, students, income from consultancy and perhaps the teaching side isn't quite as focused. (Business Fellow)

I think that is a feature of HE in that you've got large complex institutions and multiple responsibilities and then it's inevitable that it happens that way unless you have buy in from the senior management team as a whole. But you know all of the schools have a very clear message which is do more research, bring in more research income. You can't argue against that. (EEI team member)

Not only academics were short of time. One R&IS member commented on time shortage:

We suffer a bit from having the time to invest, to build, harvest the benefit of the relationship. ... In my role I struggle to keep on top of my own work and telling my manager what I'm doing rather than [having to cope with] another motivated individual dipping in and then asking more questions. Which from an institutional perspective would undoubtedly be a useful thing, but I haven't got the time to spend that time doing an hour or two debriefing every week or every fortnight or something and chatting through what would be good things to do.

Another R&IS representative mentioned how time pressure had adversely affected his capacity to assist the EEI:

The other thing to say, and this is general across the University so I'm not just saying it's us, but of course everybody is extremely busy and the volume of contracts that we process in this Department, I just don't think this was very high on our agenda. I think it was you know it's a worthwhile initiative and it is but it's not high on our agenda you know. The priorities for us are to secure more research income coming in and more enterprise income coming in and the creation of more spin-out companies. I mean they are the priorities and to minimise the contractual risk to the University, so they are our priorities and we're all very busy doing those.

People outside the University are also working under considerable time and financial pressures. One Steering Group member, external to the University, reported how he found it hard to respond as fully as he might wish to discussions and requests from people in the Initiative (as well as other people communicating with him) because of the pressures on him, making him aware that he should not over-commit on what he could deliver.

4.1.3 Physical location of the Initiative

As regards strategic positioning of the EEI, another issue was its physical institutional location. The director of the EEI, the co-ordinator of the Business Fellows, the external Business Fellows, the administrative support for the Initiative and the individual working on quality issues were all positioned within the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (LATEU). Much of the central activity of the EEI was, therefore, located in LATEU. Opinion was divided as to the desirability or otherwise of this. One school of thought argued this was a helpful location for the EEI as LATEU works across schools, rather than being associated primarily with one school, and as LATEU is strongly involved in learning and teaching issues, "the quality of education provision".

I think LATEU was the right location for doing this because [it's] independent of all the other areas, [it does] work across the institution, this is across the institution project, and indeed other projects like this I think LATEU should be a type of location for that, those kinds of activities, when it is impacting on the educational arena. If it's other areas to do with student experience like employability, things like that, obviously it needs to go into an appropriate location. I think this was the appropriate location for this. (Steering Group member)

Others thought that a more "business-facing" part of the University such as R&IS or Careers Destinations would have been more appropriate as a location because "because those two parts of the University are doing this stuff anyway and it would have meant that the activities were then aligned". Others thought that it was purely chance that the EEI team members were in LATEU and that the Initiative was independent of any one unit in the University. Another Business Fellow felt it would have been helpful to have been more integrated into the academic business of the University, because

“LATEU I think is kind of a little bit to one side” and that moving to a more business-facing part of the University would not necessarily have been helpful unless it had been more integrated.

The literature confirms that the location within an institution of the employer engagement co-ordination is never a neutral consideration. Bolden *et al.* (2010) discuss the wide variety of options followed in their ten case study HEIs, mentioning the advantages and disadvantages of each. They do not offer any prescription, but instead highlight the differential implications of a central or local positioning, in particular departments and so on.

4.2 Overlapping activities within the University

In the University, there were activities which related to those undertaken in the EEI, as previously mentioned (pp.10-11). In R&IS, there was interest in links between research and employers. The University Strategic Research Groups in Maritime and in Energy also have interests in links with employers, if mainly focused on research. Careers Destinations was interested in links with employers from the point of view of graduate recruitment and at the time of the evaluation were, for example, planning to run network development events involving R&IS, the Alumni Office, EEI team members and Careers Destinations staff. The Alumni Office was interested in links with employers through alumni. The Global Graduates Initiative in the University was interested in developing graduates able to function effectively in a global environment, including developing students and graduates oriented towards employment and employers in the shape of activities involving University-employer partnerships and employability skills. There were longstanding (sometimes large) pockets of employer engagement activity through educational provision at postgraduate and undergraduate level. The Curriculum Innovation Programme was interested in ideas likely to support flexible learning where students could “exercise choice and personalise learning”. We have mentioned earlier about how transparency and relationships between cognate initiatives in the University could be helpful. It is useful to unpack the interrelationships between these activities in some more detail and to explore the implications from the strategic point of view of the University and the EEI in particular.

The interrelationship between these activities was relatively unco-ordinated for two main reasons. Firstly, employer engagement historically had not been a high priority within the University, apart from in specific fields such as Nursing. Careers Destinations and the Alumni Office were very much in the process of developing themselves to be aligned with this area becoming a priority. Secondly, it is difficult to achieve a high degree of co-ordination in a complex institution with multiple actors pursuing different agendas in a dynamic configuration, especially without formalised structures and processes connecting the activities. Communication alone is a problem, even without consideration of how activity can be better co-ordinated by, for example, ‘piggy-backing’. One Steering Group member described the current situation, “I don’t sense that anybody is pulling together all the employer engagement activities... and bringing a network together”. She thought that a small group of people involved in Student Services, the EEI and R&IS might be developing understandings, “but operationally down a school/new faculty level I don’t think it is joined up at the moment, and that probably is where this should go”. She suggested that that was the next stage of the University development of employer engagement activities.

Lack of co-ordination may lead to some risks. Firstly, communication is likely to be less than optimal. Ideally, those in one sector of the University might pass on information about useful connections to another sector with proper co-ordination and open and transparent channels of information. However, where links are largely informal and voluntary, this may or may not work. A concern is that activities and openings may fall between cracks. Leads with useful contacts may not be followed up as they do not make it through the communication chain to the relevant people. Where activities are developing

“organically, in a slightly uncontrolled manner” (EEI team member), important aspects may not be addressed.

Secondly, different parts of the University interested in employer engagement may perceive themselves to be in competition with other parts. Or they may feel insecure and nervous about how activities they are involved in may be affected by the activities of other parts of the University. For example, they may worry their contacts will be used inappropriately, as discussed previously. One interviewee mentioned concern that the three employer spaces planned to be partially funded by the EEI might overlap with space already provided within Careers Destinations as a hub for employers.

Some of these difficulties and tensions are probably inevitable in a large organisation developing new strands of activity. Ideally, they should be minimised and the positive benefits maximised. One Steering Group member described how such difficulties were probably unavoidable and suggested that the EEI had been instrumental in bringing about connections which had had to be worked through:

I think to some extent it [tension] is unavoidable. If you look at anything to do with leadership in complex adaptive organisations it is unavoidable, because you're getting different groups of people together in a way that you haven't done before and so there will be tensions, but you need to create those new interactions, those new networks, those new tensions, to be able to work your way through them, so again I think that that is an outcome. We've got different people talking who would never have talked before I think if the Employer Engagement Initiative had not been there.

Potentially, interest in overlapping areas means that intelligence and knowledge developed in one part of the University can be passed on to other areas in the University, preventing duplication of effort.

4.3 Cultural differences

Many of the comments made in the interviews echo findings in the academic and policy literatures about employer engagement as regards its complex nature and the cultural issues involved. For example, Bolden and Petrov (2008) and Connor and Hirsh (2008) write about the complex and contested nature of the territory of employer engagement and the systemic and cultural challenges involved in developing relationships between higher education and employers over time. The cultural divide between employers and higher education is emphasised in this literature.

The interviews made clear that the divide was not just between the University and outside, but also between different parts of the University. Interviewees had very different identities, viewpoints, vested interests and priorities. Some focused more on corporate business aspects, while others focused more on a complex mix of teaching and research aspects. Some spoke with an overall strategic voice, while others spoke from one or other ‘coalface’. Literature on employer engagement emphasises the importance of clear communication within institutions (e.g. Bolden and Petrov 2008; Connor and Hirsh 2008) in order to minimise divisions within the university over employer engagement, but this may be over-simplistic in that there are different sub-cultures operating in universities (Becher and Trowler 2001; Bolden *et al.* 2010; Connor and Hirsh 2008). Effective and transparent communication is likely to facilitate employer-related initiatives, but underlying cultural differences may be an inherent part of any university.

These cultural differences related to the issue of trust necessary for information exchanges about contacts. For those coming from different sub-cultures, trust and co-operation may be more difficult to achieve.

Cultural changes, allied to practical changes, were sometimes difficult to deal with. More widespread flexible learning would require many shifts in the professional services systems and processes as well as ways of thinking about students. Traditional age, full-time students have different requirements from part-time mature students, often in full-time employment.

4.4 Short-term funding aspects

The short-term nature of funding for the EEI affected what it was able to achieve in a number of ways and raises questions about how such funding should be applied for, allocated and managed.

A two-year funding period offers a small window to achieve aims. In this initiative, it is important to remember that it had initially been hoped that the funding would be extended to four years, as discussed in Section 1 of this report. Aims were therefore broader than would have been the case for an initiative which definitely envisaged only a two-year period of funding. This created some difficulties, given that many of the activities required time to come to fruition, although some of the difficulties may have arisen anyway given the ambitious nature of the aims, the staffing challenges at the start of the Initiative and the internal and external environmental factors. Bearing in mind this context, we would like to make some comments about short-term funding aspects.

In such a constrained funding period, it is important to have clear, achievable targets. This would involve careful scoping before the bid to discover what would be feasible.

I do still feel though that we've actually perhaps tried to do too much and it's with anything, if you try and do too much at once then you have lesser impact. You know you're much better by targeting your resources in a rather different way.

And maybe the other thing would have been to say well don't do any of the institutional work, don't worry about that, but actually do some pilots, because if you do the pilots and get pilots off the ground and use all of the funding to do that then what you're able to do is demonstrate by example what works and what doesn't work. But we've been trying to do both. (EEI team member)

The second aim, that of making changes to academic processes, involves huge, time-consuming and costly changes to University administrative and IT structures and processes and commitment to, as well as investment in, e-learning structures. In two years, all that has been possible is to press for such changes and, as the University may move in the direction of flexibility anyway, many of these changes to processes may eventually happen. In terms of the third aim, that of developing pilot Masters programmes, it would probably have been helpful to work with programmes which were already well on the way to being established or to expand existing provision. Building new contacts and relationships with employers takes time, as one Business Fellow explained:

It doesn't come overnight, which is why it's so important that once you've got yourself a halfway decent contact that you grow it, you spin out new contacts or you multi-thread that one, you know somehow or other we shouldn't be losing important links that we have, we should be building on those links.

It's kind of run out of steam now really because anything that's started now won't be able to see through.

There's no point in starting something, it's not like doing a crossword puzzle, you might finish it today, ... I was business area manager for a particular part of some work I did for a company and nothing much happens in the first few months. At the end of nine months I'd got people into European programmes, new work, I'd doubled the amount of work that we were doing, which didn't start from a very big base so it's not as impressive as it sounds, you know went from like half a dozen people working to a dozen people working in the space of about nine months, but it takes that length of time between meeting somebody and talking to them about a possibility to that bearing any fruit. It takes that kind of timescale. It can take longer.

You might just be lucky and get something shorter. You might be the right person in the right place at the right time you know and that serendipity can be great you know, but typically you have to think in terms of six months or a year for something to come of a contact that you make.

Another Business Fellow explained how the Initiative had had to focus on achieving short-term deliverables, rather than setting in place activities that would not come to fruition for more than a year:

It certainly has affected how we've approached the project in that if there were a definite progression and ongoing Business Fellow network then I think there would be a lot of things that could be put in place that wouldn't come to fruition for one, two or three years, whereas because we've worked on the basis that it's a finite project, yes it would be nice that there would be legacy items going on for years but realistically for the project to be a success it has to have some deliverables and by the nature of that they have to be fairly short term, so that's partly where focusing on the --- Masters it would be nice to roll out a proforma for all Masters, but that wouldn't have been achievable in the timescale.

Realistically on a year's project, for it to be seen as a success it has to have some short-term outcomes I believe, and if there are things that take three or four years to develop and come to fruition if the project doesn't continue then they're never going to happen because there's no one to carry them on once the project ends.

[With a longer project] we could have tried to go for more strategic partnerships and develop those. We tried a few, again it's the timescale from initial contact to actually having something substantial is very, very difficult.

Where do you draw the line between continuing to chase something and saying [you're wasting your time] ... whereas if it was an ongoing project then it doesn't take that long in terms of minutes in a day to sort of try and nudge contacts along, an email or a telephone conversation or a meeting every so often, it doesn't take that much specific time but it is the time in between each event really that's the critical bit for a short term project.

Unless there's something there and then that either Business Fellows or an academic or somebody within the university can take up with the company, yes it is more difficult because you can't say well ah OK you're looking at developing something in a year or two, we're not here so...

So I don't think there's anything hugely specific to our project that's different because it's short term rather than ongoing, but I think it's *more things that affect every short term project*. (emphasis added)

As one Steering Group member articulated:

It's remarkably wonderful to get [short-term funding]... but it cuts the other way as well because by the time you've got the money, you've got it agreed, then you can start the recruitment process, ... a short-term project... is just a nightmare because unless you've got somebody who can move straight onto it by the time you've recruited the project's over.

One R&IS representative was blunt, saying that expectations should be set to realistic levels for such projects:

My summary is I don't think it's gone badly as a little initiative and I think in the last interview I had I said I don't think actually it's significantly changed the way people do things. This is a very large investment. They're busy trying to do lots and lots of things. If you invest at a modest level realistically you're not going to get earth shatteringly brilliant results very quickly and it may have been that expectations were set that we've got a strategic fund of money to do something, surely at the end of it the world will be wonderfully different and we'll be operating in new models and we're going to get lots more revenue in the very near future.

Careful scoping and realism are essential elements in developing bids for short-term funding.

In such a short time, it is likely to be difficult to recruit external people to work on a project, to orientate them to the University culture and to expect them to make appropriate employer contacts in a somewhat unfamiliar field.

I couldn't get outdoor in the first few months because I didn't have the confidence to go outdoor in the first three months because I didn't understand what response to expect from the University, and the one thing you can't do is to go and talk to an important external person, external potential partner, customer, whatever, and not know what it is you're offering, you're just not credible, so in order to be credible you need to understand something of the university and how it's going to behave. And that took a while. (Business Fellow)

Difficulties are likely to be particularly acute if the employment is only part-time and as the last few months are likely to be at least partially occupied by concern about follow-on employment. In this case, the external Business Fellows were only employed part-time for a year.

When people are just contracted for a year, they spend the first part working their way into the job and the second part worrying about what is happening next. ... there is a relatively small window in the middle where some work might actually happen. (EEI team member)

The original bid proposed eight Business Link Tutors from a range of academic schools in the University. Although recruiting external fellows appeared likely to offer valuable external expertise and potentially to challenge traditional thinking in the University, such a path proved problematic for the reasons suggested above. Given pressures on individual academics, described, it would also be problematic to select part-time Business Tutors in schools unless their paid time was to be strongly protected and unless they had strong links with employers which they could immediately deploy.

In a relatively short-term project especially, there needs to be clear and strong leadership. After the initial few months, this was available (as was described by many interviewees), but ideally it would have been there from the start. Given the length of the project and the strongly pressured environment of the University with many competing calls on the time of individuals, it would have been helpful to have had stronger line management systems within the project. It was problematic that many people on whom the project depended were not line-managed by the director of the project. In some cases this is unavoidable, as in the case of academics working in separate schools. In other cases, more thought could be given to such lines of authority in order to avoid situations where people within the project had responsibility for delivery, but not the authority to manage personnel:

If somebody has responsibility for managing someone's work on a project they should be their line manager. (EEI team member)

As the EEI director reported when speaking about the various strands of the Initiative:

At the end of the day I have to accept the fact that I'm not in control of these things. I have to rely on other people taking things up and running with them. I can't, you know, I'm not managing many of the people who are responsible for delivering these things so, you know, you have to accept that. And that's an issue with trying to achieve this sort of change when you aren't in a position to actually manage it.

The areas where there have been tangible outputs from the EEI are those within the control of the EEI team (such as the social network analysis and its dissemination) or where they have been substantially funded by the Initiative (such as the environmental health certificate).

Furthermore, meetings can be especially problematic if employees are only employed on a part-time basis on the project. Meetings, essential for co-ordination of project activities, can take a "high percentage of the working time" (Business Fellow).

Organisation of space is an important consideration in short-term Initiatives and projects. The co-location, if possible of those working on the Initiative is important:

The solution... at the OU – where there were different experts – academics, technical people – the solution [is] to bring those people together in common workspaces – even common virtual workspace. People need to understand and trust each other in a concentrated basis in order to get going on something like this. You can get an awful lot done in a short period of time if you are all working together.

But the point I was making was really about space, now this is a project where you know, we've got a small team of people that need to something quickly for a year, okay, I'd like to have a space in which we could do that. And there are lots of little projects, in my experience of working on lots of projects in business is that if you get people in the same space, working space on a daily basis, then erm, that works really well because you understand each other quickly, you get to know each other, you get to like each other, you don't get barriers being put up in front in the same way, if there's a problem then you have it out, and it gets sort of more sorted, so in terms of, I know the university is looking at learning spaces, but it would be good if it was to look at project spaces, and say well I'll book that project space for a year, and you know, it's one office, it's big enough for maybe six people at a time, maybe you've got ten on the project, but you've never had more than six in at any one time, and when you do work on that area you do go and sit in the office and you know, if you're working on it all the time ... then you'd be in there all the time. (EEI team member)

Connor and Hirsh (2008) in their study of the articulation between employers and higher education emphasised the importance of keeping the same individuals involved over time in order to build and maintain good relationships. In projects funded only for a relatively short period such relationships are problematic with the chances of relationship breakdowns and inability to fulfill promises quite high.

The short-term nature of the funding relates strongly to the next section on sustainability.

4.5 Sustainability

One major question is the sustainability of the various activities started by the EEI. Some are likely to survive. Activities requiring one-off inputs of funding and limited in-house support such as the Environmental Masters programme and the refurbished spaces for employers are likely to continue.

Activities in which networks were started and contacts were made may continue, if the relevant employees in the University remain in post. Some networking activities functioned only partially because of the EEI and those are likely to continue if other parts of the University were involved in their generation as well. The Business Fellows are no longer in post as their funding finished with the end of EEI. Given cuts in University funding and the restructuring taking place in the University, it is unlikely that there will be continuation of such posts through internal funding.

Some activities such as the mapping and auditing activities of Geodata and Roberta Comunian may be useful if they are sufficiently embedded in the University and are taken up by others. This is unclear at the moment. The TEL Guidelines remain and have been written with longevity in mind. The Guidelines should serve any staff developing their expertise in e-learning whatever the technology platform.

Some functions of the EEI may be taken over by other parts of the University. One Steering Group member suggested that the part of her role that relates to employability would be taken over by Career Destinations.

4.6 'Chicken and egg' situations

Various 'chicken and egg' situations happened during the Initiative. We have already seen the difficulties of moving forward on quality assurance issues in the absence of a concrete case to put through the system. (See p.21 for a discussion of this.)

Another difficulty arose with estimating demand for potential courses. It was difficult to gauge demand with no product, but difficult to create a product with unknown demand. One potential course developer articulated the problems he faced. Some employers had asked him to deliver an accredited module, so he asked them about likely demand, but this was hard to estimate overall as the course had not been widely advertised, given that it had not been fully developed and the University was not certain it would run the module.

It's a bit of a 'chicken and egg' thing, actually. We haven't really advertised and informal canvassing has shown that possibly not that many would be interested in accrediting it, which, in turn, may raise some other questions around overall this initiative

The issues were further complicated in that the course could be offered with an assessed assignment and accreditation or simply as a CPD activity. The former would be a more expensive option because of time required from employers freeing up employees, employees doing the assignment and academics marking the assignment and given that many employers are stretched in the current financial climate may not be possible or popular. Employers might prefer just to have unaccredited CPD modules as they could afford to send more employees to take those. Financial viability was therefore difficult to estimate. The issue of estimating demand in advance of a course being offered was difficult and a potentially expensive risk to take, given the cost of course design in terms of staff time. For developing new online courses, the costs were even greater.

Other 'chicken and egg' difficulties arose for the Business Fellows going out to speak to employers. They had a delicate task to manage in that they were trying both to find out what employers wanted and trying to raise awareness of what the University can offer and 'sell' without having a clear product. One Business Fellow explained the difficulties as follows:

The challenge is I suppose we don't know what we're trying to sell because the initiative is developing what we're trying to sell, so we're both trying to sell and to go out and consult with employers to work out what they want, so we're trying to increase numbers of seats, bums on seats, at the same time as we're working out or trying to evaluate what it is we want to sell.

Selling can be hard but I think if you know what you've got on offer you know, if you had the list, the manual or the directory of what you've got on offer then you can do it, but it's more subtle than that, we're doing more than that because we're listening to what they want and then looking back and seeing what have we got that better meets that, so it is a two-way process.

In some ways this was probably easier for the internal Fellows who had existing contacts with employers. They could mention the Initiative in existing meetings without fear of loss of face, and were more directly aware of whom it might be useful to speak to because of their pre-existing contacts, although sometimes it turned out that existing contacts were not the people who had authority or knowledge to speak about CPD requirements. For the external Business Fellows, such contacts were especially hard as they were both unfamiliar with University culture, services and course structures and trying to develop new contacts with employers.

It was easier to approach employers about CPD courses, rather than full Masters programmes:

It's much easier to sell a single course or a single CPD course or a single short course. You can go straight to your market that you know is going to be interested, whereas Masters in a modular framework is quite hard, and since the university hasn't decided what it's going to sell, we're almost too early. (Business Fellow)

Timing of approaches to employers could be crucial:

You need to get both sides synchronised, you need the outside person to be inquisitive at the same time as the internal people are being receptive. ... And then you can get the engagement, but they've got to be synchronised, which is what we were talking about before, if you make a contact there and it takes you six months to line it up here, they've probably gone off the boil. (Business Fellow)

Funding models were another area where progress could not be made as pilot programmes had not yet come to fruition so the 'product' remained hypothetical.

'Chicken and egg' situations would in some cases be resolved through time (e.g. when concrete courses developed) and in some cases would have been less likely to arise if there had been more clarity about prioritisation within the institution and at the level of the individual academic and perhaps if existing provision had been extended, rather than focusing on the creation of new provision.

4.7 Learning opportunity versus concrete attainment

The question arises about how far such an initiative should have concrete achievements and how far it should be valued for the learning opportunities it offers those working on the initiative, institutional leaders, managers and staff, as well as members of HEFCE. In this regard, the evaluation of the EEI can only provide a partial response because of the unexpectedly foreshortened period of likely funding and the need for the Initiative to adapt goals mid-way through the first scoping, pilot phase.

Certainly, the Initiative offered many opportunities for institutional learning about how to interact with employers, what was likely to be of interest to them, and with which employers it was most likely to be useful to interact. It also offered much on how e-learning approaches would have to be supported and about quality issues. In many ways, its value was as a scoping and feasibility exercise:

Absolutely, the pilot is doing what it said on the tin. (Steering Group member)

There were also a series of partial achievements as discussed earlier. This coming academic year some of these activities may come to fruition with the ongoing funding from HEFCE.

One Steering Group member summed up the overall contribution of the Initiative to the strategic direction of the University:

It's difficult to know what it might mean ten years down the line. I'm fairly sort of sanguine about these sorts of things. We were funded for a specific period of time for a specific project. We'll get some learning out of it, we'll get a change out of it, it will feed in to the strategic direction of the university, all of these projects and initiatives funded through HEFCE and various bodies all contribute to our gradual strategic development clearly but I don't think there's any one single project that the university changed its direction because of one project. But every one of them in a small way makes a contribution.

4.8 Changing foci as Initiative developed

The Initiative was a dynamic project which had to operate with considerable flexibility. Some of the changes have been described in this report. For example, the cancellation of the Faraday Building as a suitable venue for the Design Centre was addressed by the switch to the idea of three spaces for employer interactions. As pilot Masters projects became untenable, new ones had to be explored. As the economic crisis worsened, new possibilities had to be considered. The question arises about whether some of these difficulties could have been foreseen. Clearly some, such as the economic crisis, could not have been predicted. Greater caution could perhaps have been exercised about which pilot Masters to focus on, and a decision made to focus on projects already started, but such a conservative approach might have led to less imaginative and creative developments. However, it could also be argued that, to be truly employer responsive, an organisation needs to be reactive and flexible, and that was something those principles were adhered to in the EEL, in order to make the most of opportunities as they arose.

4.9 Location of demand for M level provision

Given the economic backdrop to the Initiative, comments on demand for M level provision should be read with some caution. However, as one Steering Group member pointed out, even taking into account the lack of time to develop relationships with them, there was little evidence of significant “effective demand” for M level provision of flexible learning from Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, “and by ‘effective demand’ I mean that they both want the product and are willing to pay for it”. He went on to point out that most significant employer engagement in the University involved large employers such as the National Health Service and the Ministry of Defence.

The general consensus was that big companies were useful to work with as they create economies of scale in terms of effort put into course development and relationship building in return for students they can offer, because of training budgets:

Some of the large companies, I think there's scope for developing MSc's for training packages that year on year they'll be sending several members of staff on. Those are the sort of companies I think there's more interest on getting sort of prolonged relationships going, particularly if the exact course isn't available, where some of the smaller companies... they're less interested in yearly staff training and more interested in filling knowledge gaps within the company.

Sometimes a professional body could provide access to a large demand for a course:

Now I think the Environmental Health one is an interesting variant on that because what we're actually tailoring it to is the requirement of a professional body and in order to practise in that area or in order to progress your career in that area to have something which is accredited by a professional body is obviously a huge advantage. (Steering Group member)

An alternative view, rejected by the Steering Group member explaining it, would be:

The opposite view of that is you don't know who you need to concentrate on so you need to bring a lot of people into the tent and then find out from those 50 people or 20 people which are the three or four who you can really work with. So it is a difficult one but I don't think that we can spend this sort of public money regularly trying to find that out. (Steering Group member)

One Steering Group member pointed out the potential opportunities for building on existing research relationships when investigating demand:

Now there are some superb examples of our relationship with firms, Rolls Royce, BA Systems in engineering, previously in management Rolls Royce, you know there are some really, really good examples, and research links with IBM, Microsoft, Lloyd's Register, you know, all of these areas. Whether there's much Masters level educational activity in these areas, but there are opportunities to develop with these really big employers. And that's what I mean about the scale of it as well. Working with small employers is not going to generate that scale and if then you've got something which really appeals to Rolls Royce or Lloyd's Register or something you can probably cross-sell that product in some shape or form to the wider sector. But I think it's really difficult to find, to get the sector to develop a product. Now I might be completely wrong on this but I haven't seen any evidence of the success that we wanted out of this project coming from the sector based approach. (Steering Group member)

It is important to bear in mind, however, that even with large employers demand may vary. For instance, the School of Management has collaborated on specialist MBA strands which run for a couple of years and then stop.

4.10 The value of mapping and auditing activities

One of the difficulties facing the EEI was a lack of institution-wide knowledge about what was already happening in the University, making it difficult to plan effectively. There were three mapping and auditing activities which took place during the EEI: the initial audit of existing provision; the audit within Geodata of University activities within the maritime sector and of external provision of maritime courses; and Roberta Comunian's mapping of the social network relationships within the Maritime University Strategic Research Group. The first two of these provided a useful basis on which to move forward with plans for employer engagement. Given the lack of co-ordinated data on existing provision this work has provided a useful basis on which to develop future activities. The third provided an extensive research analysis of the existing functioning of a University Research Group and the implications of those for University engagement with employers as regards both research and flexible education provision.

5. Key findings and recommendations

This section will explore implications of the findings and lessons learned and suggest ways forward. The discussion builds on the analysis of the data collected throughout the lifetime of the Southampton Initiative and the comments and reflections of those who have gained considerable insight in to the potential as well as the challenges of developing the University's employer engagement capacity at M level and more generally. It is important that this expertise is recognised and built on in the development of future strategy and activity.

5.1 Key findings

5.1.1 Contextual factors

Contextual factors played a central role in the working of the Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI).

The change in **external economic conditions** between 2007, when the bid was written, and 2008 when the Initiative started meant that the EEI functioned in a vastly different environment from that envisaged by the bid's authors and the Higher Education Funding Council. The banking crisis led to serious difficulties in the private sector and later the public sector and to cuts in higher education. As a result, employers were less able to finance continuing professional development (CPD) for their employees. This context had a profound effect on what the Initiative was able to achieve.

The **internal university environment** also had a powerful effect on achievements. Initial staffing challenges delayed the start of the Initiative. In October 2009 a new Vice-Chancellor took office, initiating and pursuing policies likely to encourage the development of flexible delivery of courses, but also initiating a period of reorganisation. This made it more difficult to achieve concrete changes during this period because of the uncertainties about structures, processes and the role of relevant personnel in the new structure.

5.1.2 Central aims of the Initiative as expressed in the bid

Aim 1 Increasing the coherence of the University approach to employer engagement

The EEI achieved the following:

- Worked with R&IS to develop the university's virtual Gateway, through enhancing presentation of the existing CPD offer and assisting with an analysis of competitor websites;
- Directly engaged in or facilitated the following processes: general awareness raising within the university; awareness raising of needs and interests external to the university; specific interactions between particular university units and employers and sector representatives; adding CPD discussions to existing meetings between the university and employers; and a contribution to cultural change in the university;
- Implemented three audit and mapping activities (an initial audit of existing flexible, postgraduate provision, a mapping project for the Maritime University Strategic Research Group, and an assessment of university activity within the maritime sector);
- Developed understandings about what was and what was not likely to be of interest to employers;
- Contributed to the development of a Corporate Relationship Strategy.

Although several factors assisted the Initiative (the existence and contributions of Research and Innovation Services, Careers Destinations, existing academic-employer links), other factors posed challenges for the EEI (non-standard processes across 20 Schools, communication within a large

university and the difficulties of building trust between different parts of the institution with different processes, structures, personnel and cultures).

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- Implemented three audit and mapping activities (an initial audit of existing flexible, postgraduate provision, a mapping project for the Maritime University Strategic Research Group, and an assessment of university activity within the maritime sector).
- Developed understandings about what was and what was not likely to be of interest to employers.
- Contributed to the development of a Corporate Relationship Strategy.

Aim 2 Changes to academic processes to enable flexible delivery of M level education

The EEI achieved the following:

- Submitted the business case for changing various administrative systems in the University which will make flexible delivery more possible;
- A Technology Enhanced Learning Guide offering principles of practice, identifying key issues for planning and managing TEL projects, seeking to encourage academic engagement in TEL, and providing details of internal and external people and organisations to contact about proposed projects;
- Reviewing the quality assurance procedures of the University and assessing their suitability for employer responsive provision, and proposing various options for quality assurance of flexible learning courses;
- Input into the Curriculum Innovation Programme within the University, especially the sub-sections of postgraduate taught courses and continuing professional development;
- Initiation of discussion about various financial aspects of flexible provision, including payment-in-kind and actual costs of teaching particular courses.

Although some factors assisted the EEI (the possibility of 'workarounds' and a culture of working things out), others worked against the Initiative including registration, financial, IT and quality systems designed to support full-time students on full-length programmes.

Aim 3 Pilot projects

The EEI achieved the following:

- As this report goes to press, a flexibly delivered, postgraduate certificate in Environmental Health, leading potentially to a full Masters pathway, is being developed. Not only will this deliver a new programme to the university, but also a model of how such a course can be developed using a variety of expertise, including that of freelance learning designers.
- One module in an Energy Certificate has been developed.
- The team has been involved in exploring in some depth the possibility of an undergraduate programme tailored to the needs of a specific employer, the outcome of this is as yet unclear.

Although some factors assisted the EEI in developing its pilots of postgraduate flexible provision (pre-existing flexible units and programmes within the University with related expertise in programme development, administration and marketing), other factors provided challenges including the traditional focus in the university on full-time, traditional-age students which meant there was little incentive or need for Schools or academics to investigate other models. Various options for development were explored as the project developed.

Aim 4 Design Centre

The loss of the building where the Design Centre was to be was an early major blow to the Initiative, making it impossible to have such a centre. However, this idea is being revived by the new Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and the Environment.

Other matters

The EEI aimed to recruit 60 new M level FTE students on to flexible credit-based courses, co-funded by employers. It had been envisaged that the ASN allocation would be used on the pilot courses described previously. This proved problematic for three main reasons:

- Suitable courses could not be developed in time, although the new Environment Health Certificate should recruit from October 2011 on a part-time basis.
- ASNs were difficult to use. In order to get 60 ASNs (FTE), the university would need to recruit 200 or 250 part-time Masters students for a year to do one or two modules in order to reach 60 ASNs.
- The University has other groups of students who may fit the ASN criteria, but it is hard to access the relevant data as it is currently not routinely collected.

This picture was complicated by the somewhat complex and unclear nature of the funding for ASNs.

5.1.3 Emerging themes

Firstly, engagement with employers presents universities with various dilemmas and challenges relating to the nature and extent of risk taken on and effort and resources invested, as priorities are balanced. These are documented in this report and are also clearly visible in the wider literature (*inter alia* Bolden *et al.* 2010; Connor and Hirsh 2008; and the Lambert Review 2003).

To give some examples, Connor and Hirsh (2008) mention a key difficulty for employer engagement being “the high risks involved for many universities entering new employer markets (e.g. development costs, lack of experience outside of traditional student market, uncertainty on continuity over more than one year)” (p.12). Bolden *et al.* (2010) mention the importance of building personal relationships between academics and employers for successful employer engagement and that these “should be supported rather than replaced by institutional support functions” (p.3). This requires effective yet sensitive development of support functions. The intensification of work and additive principle of workload for individual academics (Becher and Trowler 2001; Henkel 1997; Ogbonna and Harris 2004) is sometimes addressed by provision of time and funding for employer engagement activities, but Bolden *et al.* (2010) report that “a major unresolved issue is whether academics who actively support the EE agenda will find their endeavours are also recognised in HE promotion systems” (p.4). Bolden and Petrov (2008) mention the pressures of research assessment exercises on the priorities of institutions and individual academics (p.35-6). How a university should react to the various dilemmas and challenges is not straightforward and involves prioritisation and balancing of different agendas.

Secondly, there are significant cultural differences within sub-sections of the University as well as between the University and employers. Such differences are well documented in the literature (*inter alia* between academic 'tribes' Becher and Trowler 2001; between support teams and academics Bolden *et al.* 2010; between employers and academics (Connor and Hirsh 2008). Bolden *et al.* (2010) mention the need for universities to "work hard to ensure that a 'them' and 'us' culture does not develop between staff groups" which might happen if the idea of business development teams as 'support' for academics is undermined (p.36). Connor and Hirsh (2008) identify the "different terminology used in business and HE and different working cultures" as being a key difficulty for employer engagement with higher education (p.12). Such cultural differences will continue to exist, given the complex nature of higher education. We suggest that the negative effects as regards engagement with employers can be minimised by the recommendations below.

Thirdly, short-term funding affects the nature of goals and achievements; it is hard to develop sustainable relationships, processes and products within short funding periods. The wider literature on employer engagement emphasises the importance of building relationships over time with employers (e.g. Bolden *et al.* 2010; Connor and Hirsh 2008). The challenges of achieving new but stable relationships within a short-term funding horizon are always considerable and extend across a number of fields (see *inter alia* Bull and Crompton 2005 [social enterprise]; Coalter (2000) [sport]; Seyfang 2002 [establishing time banks to tackle social exclusion]; and Shucksmith 2002 [rural development]). From a somewhat different viewpoint, the Lambert Review (2003) was critical of the extensive use of hypothecated funding in higher education initiatives, highlighting harmful effects such as increased application and regulatory pressures on institutions.

Recommendations for how to address the dilemmas and challenges are given below.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 The institutional level: appropriate strategic positioning

The university should be clear about how it wants to position itself institutionally with regard to employer engagement and curriculum development, and take action accordingly. The University has clear areas of employer responsive education and training, but must decide if and how this should be coordinated and promoted at the institutional level and what costs and benefits are involved. Linked to this are questions about the offer at M level and flexible delivery: for instance, how far, if at all, is M level flexible educational provision to be a strategic priority for the University of Southampton and how can this be practically supported? This (amongst other issues) arose in the consideration of the review of PGT programming which was carried out in 2010. The recommendations of the review are to be taken forward in 2011.

Bolden *et al.* (2010) reported how some higher education institutions had decided that large scale employer engagement "outside existing patterns of teaching was not the way forward for them" (p.23). This may be Southampton's decision. Bolden and Petrov (2008) point out that "the scale and profitability of this market [higher education and employer engagement] remains relatively uncertain. It is an unpredictable and contested market that poses many risks and challenges" (p.6). Connor and Hirsh (2008) confirm that the market for workforce development by employers is uncertain with demand skewed towards "a few universities (and their business schools) (p.11).

Clearly, involvement is complex and competitive. However, some activities promoted by the EEI, as we have seen, are likely to have benefits. More might have been achieved with more secure, long-term

funding. Additionally, there are already various successful employer responsive programmes at M level in the University (e.g. in Health Sciences, in Engineering and in Education). Moreover, *Bolden et al.* (2010) suggest that there is likely to be considerable demand “at the top end of the skills spectrum to re-skill the existing professional workforce through short courses or Masters modules” and that this “sits more readily with academic interests and... research agendas. It also links with existing academic consultancy to industry” (p.50). In a time of economic austerity and reduced government funding, employer engagement in flexible education is a potential source of revenue for Southampton.

If the university wishes serious involvement in such provision, certain steps should be taken to facilitate such activity. The review of Lifelong Learning and CPD, carried out in 2010, has explored the potential for an institutional approach to provision of CPD opportunities to companies and organisations, as well as individuals, and this work will continue in 2011.

Leadership of employer engagement

A clearer path of authority and leadership for employer and community engagement within the University would signal its importance. One Business Fellow suggested that visible leadership in the faculties, in the shape of Associate-Deans of Business and Community Engagement, would underline the importance of related activities for the University. Employer engagement in the shape of involvement in M level flexible provision is, as previously discussed, only one aspect of business and community activity.

Systemic co-ordination of relationships and systems within the University

There should be systemic co-ordination of employer engagement activity. Links between different parts of the University concerned with employer engagement (the EEI, R&IS, Career Destinations, the Alumni Office and academic departments) have tended to be informal and voluntary. People have often not known about relevant activities happening in other places in the University. It would be useful to develop systems to strengthen structures, processes and communication.

One co-ordinating strategy which could be developed is that representatives from one part of the University who go out to speak to companies should be able to field questions and promote the activities of other parts of the University. As one R&IS representative argued:

I think anyone who is going out engaging with companies should be able to cross-sell... so I should be in a position to you know talk about Career Destinations, upskilling existing workforce, providing CPD or whatever we want to call it, I should know the basics so that I'm in a position to do that, mindful of the fact my expertise is elsewhere in terms of knowledge research and enterprise, but I should just have a basic overview and I think my counterparts elsewhere with different agendas should have a basic overview of what I am trying to do so that if they get asked a question of “Oh can you do this” and you know it's not within your sphere, you say “I think we do, but you need to speak to so and so and I'll arrange for them to call you”.

A broad employer engagement approach which set out and implemented a co-ordinated approach to employer engagement would be advantageous. This approach would identify and implement structures, processes and responsibilities across the University with a clear vision of the role of employer engagement within the University's priorities, including what the University can offer employers. Processes and structures should be facilitative rather than restrictive. Although mainly focused on aspects of employer engagement related to research and graduate recruitment, the Corporate Relationship Strategy now incorporated into the University Strategy sets out a framework by which such an approach might be developed. A copy of the Corporate Relationship Strategy is available at Appendix K.

Regular meetings of those involved in employer engagement activities would potentially be helpful, although there is always the problem of meetings fatigue unless the meetings serve an essential purpose for those attending.

Audit and mapping activities and easy accessibility to information about existing activities are valuable resources which would facilitate intra-institutional knowledge and a 'joined-up approach'.

More active interaction outside the University

There is an opportunity for more active interaction at "industry/university matching type events":

Our Russell Group comparators are often there with quite a few people whereas we're not and the problem we have again it's a time thing and it's a funding thing you know, if you want key academics particularly to attend these conferences or events – have they got the time? Have they got the budget to do that? (R&IS representative)

This R&IS interviewee went on to argue that "we need more of a collaboration development function, we need more people out there making the links with industry, making the links with companies and then following up on that... our Russell Group counterparts seem to do more in terms of being out there externally".

Activities with large employers seem especially likely to produce effective returns in terms of time and money invested than with smaller ones, who may not be able to pay for employee training. Bolden *et al.* (2010) discuss how some HEIs choose to focus on engagement with a limited number of large employers.

Connor and Hirsh (2008) suggest that "a recognition that *employers bring something complementary* and are not just an additional funding source" is likely to lead to more successful engagement activities. They suggest that "this can be in ideas and enthusiasm for engagement" and/or practical contributions such as "buildings, practical facilities, case studies, teaching or assessment time" (p.52). They reported that some of the most successful engagements they encountered in their research were those where the employer was a more active partner. Bolden *et al.* (2010) discuss the view that employer engagement, including CPD, is often viewed as being about the "wider community and social contribution of HE, not just meeting the skills needs of employers" and that this is beneficial (p.3).

The University could use the current challenging economic environment to try to generate business and goodwill. Bolden *et al.* (2010) reported how some HEIs had used the economic downturn to try to generate business by using a voucher system to give small companies an amount of free University input and had held workshops on 'survival'. Creative ideas such as this might have some place in thinking about future postgraduate employer engagement education activity.

Adjustment of working patterns, workload models and promotion systems

If staff are to be involved in employer engagement, this has to be appropriately recognised in workload models and potentially in promotion systems. At the moment, employer engagement tends to rely on an individual hero or enthusiast model, as with the Energy Certificate described on p.26, rather than being integral to staff workload, with appropriate systemic support available to those becoming involved in M level employer engagement. Where senior staff are required to lead changes at particular moments, their time should be freed to do so (Steering Group member).

In order to involve relevant people, teams could be brought together for relatively short periods of time such as one week and relieved of other duties, which would enable trust to be built up and substantial progress to be made on the development of relevant materials and policies (EEI team member). This may well require a small number of temporary but strategic adjustments. These types of measures are recognised in the literature as important. Bolden *et al.* (2010) mention recognition for staff of employer engagement as important, as well as the need to recognise that everyone cannot do everything and that there has to be specialisation and rationalisation of activities.

Involvement in employer engagement activities at M level provision and related achievements could be recognised by some kind of award from the Vice-Chancellor or relevant faculty. Champions of employer engagement could be appointed. One Business Fellow described a vision of how recognition and involvement from students, employers and alumni could work:

I would love to see employer engagement champions in the university. It would be marvellous if once a term, once a month, as often as there was an achievement really, if the VC and two or three of his UEG colleagues would recognise an individual who did something brilliant for employer engagement for the university. If that happened as a regular normal process, if it involved students in championing these things too, then it would bring great joy and benefit, it would help alumni relations because all of these students and employers get together in the future somehow or another and there are students and there are alumni and they will achieve great things and they will recognise Southampton's contribution if Southampton contributes. But if we haven't contributed much other than vicariously, if we only contribute by chance, if it only comes out of what the student did with the employers or what an employer did with a student then we're removed from the process, you know, the university is removed from the process.

There should be an award maybe for people who are good at doing that or maybe there should be more support or more you know newsletters saying oh look what these people do with their engagement you know so sort of try to create a bit more awareness. The engagement is there, it's not like it needs to be engineered in any way, you know what I mean, it's not, but I think there should be a bit more recognition about the importance of it and when it's done you know the kind of positive affect it can have on the society, on the research or whatever, so I think that's something that maybe the university missed a bit. (Business Fellow)

Adjustment of other systems

Financial systems to allow the purchase of study by module, rather than complete programme, is likely to encourage participation by more students.

Work begun by the EEI on underlying costing of courses should be developed. Bolden *et al.* (2010) stressed the need for HEIs to become more conscious of the cost of provision relevant to employer engagement activities to foster competitiveness and to ensure the long-term sustainability of initiatives.

There could be development of the website to disseminate the University's offer more clearly and accessibly to employers. As one Business Fellow argued:

There are quick wins to be made there in just getting the house in order and just understanding how to deliver information about the courses you have. I don't think you need to corral everything into a single place, because again I think that probably stifles innovation, but you can improve the accessibility of the information.

Collaboration with employers and professional bodies in course design, where possible, is likely to encourage the development of courses which are more relevant to those employers. Other competitor institutions are doing this (Business Fellow). This a feature of existing successful employer engagement programmes at M level at the University of Southampton.

Possibly greater attention could be paid to opportunities for students to enter the University using Accredited Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL). This would benefit potential mature students, often currently employees, who may be an important market in the coming years of uncertainty and change for undergraduate provision.

Discussions about unaccredited CPD and accredited learning have arisen throughout this report. Bolden *et al.* (2010) rehearse the arguments for both accredited and unaccredited study (e.g. relative cost, benefit for employee vs benefit for employer, degree of professional recognition), but suggest that the majority of HEIs take a pragmatic view about employer attitudes and provide a mixture of accredited learning and unaccredited CPD.

E-learning

If the University wishes to engage more seriously in e-learning, it is essential to provide a consistently high quality student experience and support for academic staff developing courses. Dedicated expertise is necessary to provide these. Such expertise in the shape of University-approved learning designers and learning media technical staff could be bought in as required, thus addressing the peaks and troughs of demand. Such experts would know “how to design a curriculum, a learning experience”, as on the MSc in Environmental Health, and would work in co-operation with academics.

5.2.2 Initiative level

Bids for funding should be based on realistic, achievable aims. Problems were exacerbated in this respect with the EEI because of the dramatically changed economic circumstances, entailing the removal of the possibility of two years’ further funding and the inability of employers and some Schools within the University to follow up on initial support for M levels courses. However, even four years may be a short period to develop and market new courses and change University processes. Building on existing activities, in this case existing M level provision, rather than prioritising totally new activities is a less risky strategy in such circumstances.

Creating employer engagement from afresh is hard and risky. Whilst it should not necessarily be ruled out where new markets are spotted, it is likely to be easier to exploit existing relationships, perhaps based around research or pure CPD. One Steering Group member suggested that the way forward for the University was to focus on existing relationships and to upgrade those and use them more strategically for the mutual benefit of both University and employer:

The relationship we've had with the Office for National Statistics, with the MSc in official statistics, the work that we have done and have successfully brought in health into higher education, the work that education do, it is having long ongoing relationships that leads to successful employer engagement. We have had long successful engagement with employers at the research end, particularly the engineering end, for many, many years. We've got strategic relationships with Rolls Royce, BAe Systems, etc. They're just two of many large ones. That's been mainly at the research end. I think what this is doing is actually to exploit the other opportunities that we have got with those types of bodies where there is a genuine mutual self interest that leads to sustainable meaningful employer engagement.

Bolden *et al.* (2010) reported that often successful employer engagement was based on the expansion of existing activities, reusing or repurposing existing materials. New materials are costly and time-consuming to develop so building on existing resources is an efficient and effective use of resources. Some institutions in their study wished to concentrate on employer engagement activities in line with their existing institutional strengths. They stressed that relationships took time to build (especially given the cultural gaps between employers and the University) and that these should be valued and

nurtured. Such relationship building has to be based within long-term structures and processes within the University.

Clear line management structures within Initiatives and short-term projects should be in place.

If possible, those working on a project should be co-located to facilitate interaction, the exchange of information and the development of trust and working relationships.

Final comments

Clearly the Employer Engagement Initiative faced many challenges, but nonetheless it had many positive outcomes, including significant capacity building within the University.

References

This report has presented an evaluation of one Employer Engagement Initiative. The broader literature as outlined in the list of references below provides a rich resource of description and analysis of other experiences as well as reviews of related literature.

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Appendix A Employer Engagement Initiative bid

Annexe A Business Plan contents



Annex A : Business Plan Contents

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1. The Rationale

1.1 The University

The University of Southampton is a world class university, ranking of 80 within the world universities, according to a Times Higher survey in 2007, and 14th nationally (Times Good University guide, 2007). Southampton ranks joint first (with 4 other Universities) in which every engineering department has a top research quality rating of 5* and is one of the UK's leading universities for engineering. Our knowledge transfer capabilities and scholarship therefore are our main comparative advantage and with respect to taught programmes and master's provision in particular. Since 1998 our postgraduate entry across the University has increased by 44%.

1.2 The University Structure

The University has a devolved structure comprising three faculties: (1) Engineering, Science and Maths, (2) Law, Arts and Social Sciences and (3) Medicine, Health and Life Sciences. Within each faculty there are Schools with devolved budgetary responsibility and accountability to the University Executive Group via the faculties. Each faculty has a Deanery with a Dean and associate deans for education, enterprise and research. Each School has a Head and deputies for education, enterprise and research.

1.3 Our Strategic Commitment to Employer Engagement in Education

The **Corporate Strategy** of the University of Southampton is intended to establish the means whereby the University achieves a position among the top ten universities in the UK as judged by recognised measures of excellence for research, education and enterprise. **The University's Enterprise Strategy** (October 2007) has more closely defined how the University will move forward as an *Enterprising University*. With respect to PGT education, the drivers for change are the cost implications for learners already in work and the need to offer flexible and targeted courses that have direct benefit to the end users. We see graduate employability as a key driver that will impact on the success of the University through the provision of programmes which have direct benefits to business and the region. Our priorities for action in education are: (1) To develop curricula that are more responsive to external need, and speed internal processes related to curriculum development, (2) To generate ownership and understanding of the role for Enterprise in Education and (3) To define the roles and responsibility of School-based Enterprise Staff and promote and run staff development to "build staff capacity for enterprise". **Our Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy** (2006-2010) concentrates on the development of: Student-centred, Research-led Learning, Employability, Inclusivity, Staff development and reward, and Building the infrastructure for education.

1.4 Our Challenge

Our current fragmented approach to employer engagement results in employers receiving a somewhat adhoc experience when dealing with the University. Busy academics can also feel overloaded by approaches from employers as there is generally no defined mechanism for dealing with such enquiries, and while industrial advisory boards in some schools do help, their impact is somewhat patchy.

We have identified four major obstacles that hinder employer engagement:

- The uncoordinated and fragmented nature of our employer engagement activity.

- The inflexibility of our M level provision for workforce development.
- The inflexibility of our academic processes.
- Staff time and know-how regarding employer engagement.

1.5 The Appraisal of our Options

The financial plan illustrates the financial costs and benefits of the following: (a) do nothing, (b) the plan without the Design Centre, (c) the plan including the Design Centre. See accompanied Excel spreadsheet for a full costing of the options. The options show the following NPV of discounted cash flows over a 20 year period.

Option	NPV £'000	Variance from 'Do Nothing' £'000
Do Nothing	(1,419)	n/a
Project without Design Centre	+2,770	+4,189
Project with Design Centre	+5,626	+7,045

With regard to the option we have selected we are seeking **£794,700** plus a repayable grant of £1.2 million for the refurbishment of a floor in a current building as a Design Centre. We have also sought additional funded numbers from HEFCE, based on 80% of the normal HEFCE contribution (assuming a 'long' PGT course). The tuition fee and 20% of the usual HEFCE contribution would be funded by employers. For more financial details, see section 3.0 and accompanied Excel Spreadsheet.

1.6 SWOT Analysis for 'remaining as we are'

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>A University of good repute (80th World ranking, 2007, 14th national ranking, 2006).</p> <p>Employers are very interested in working with us for research and education (evidence from Schools, University Industrial Liaison Board).</p> <p>Good, yet fragmented employer engagement at School level (student placements, sponsorships, project work, visiting lecturers) for undergraduate provision.</p> <p>Engineering, Management and Art are areas within the University with excellent external reputations.</p>	<p>We fail to fully exploit our reputation with respect to Education in the Business community.</p> <p>Meetings with Business, via for example various Industrial Liaison Boards tend to fall short of putting wishes and actions into practice. This is mainly due to lack of operational mechanisms and a lack of time for staff to take this kind of work forward.</p> <p>We tend to rely on Business approaching us because of our reputation and fail to professionalise, enhance or expand this collaboration effectively.</p> <p>External liaison relations between the University tends to be concentrated on research links with little thought to working up strategic collaboration with education in Business, Sector Skills Councils and SEEDA.</p> <p>As a research led university, we have traditionally felt that our liaison should be with research and that the Business-Education link is the realm of the newer universities.</p>

Strong industrial research and consultancy links.	<p>We have no space or easy processes within the University to develop multidisciplinary education.</p> <p>Our academic processes and staff knowledge hinder PGT education that is run by Business for students and the Business community. Our boundaries are too rigid.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Quality research led education is our market strength. We are at a threshold where our PGT education can be revolutionised. Through Business and research inputs we can provide cutting edge content, which is flexibly delivered within a Certification scheme for employers, a Career Enhancement Scheme (credit accumulation) for individuals within the usual credit based system for full time students.</p> <p>With these new products we can explore different funding models that go some way to answering the 3rd stream envisaged by the Lambert Review.</p> <p>The Leitch Review has given the sector a new impetus to working collaboratively with Business</p> <p>A Design Centre at Southampton will build on the reputation of Engineering, Management and Arts, providing an innovative hub for the region, a magnet for business – education collaboration and be cutting edge, not only in design education, but also in its delivery, management and funding . T</p> <p>There is no equivalent centre in the region and we can take advantage of the UK Design Council's growing expertise in this area to support the endeavour (discussions with them, confirm this).</p>	<p>Business is more alert to the need to work with Education and Government initiatives begin to create a financial lure. Many Universities are increasingly aware of this new market and are gearing up their approach to provide a professional collaboration. We need to be a key player in this area and not see this as only for new universities. (Apple PCs had an elitist approach to their product and lost the market).</p> <p>PGT education will become increasingly expensive, with UK students unable to afford a full study year (longer if aligned with Bologna). Many of our PG taught programmes are experiencing this already. It is also important that UK students are able to gain advanced/specialist training.</p> <p>New methods of educational funding will be more diverse in the future and depend on collaboration and contacts with Business.</p> <p>Boundaries between academia and business will continue to blur as increasingly business offer accredited training. New interdisciplinary curricula with boundary blurring between PG students and employees, between academic staff and visiting staff from Business will be more prevalent.</p> <p>The notion that 'design' stays in the West and production in the East is losing credibility as Nokia has recently teamed up with the Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore, India.</p>

1.7 The Option Selected - The Project

Please note that 'Business' is being used to cover both public and private sectors.

The bid team consulted with various sectors of the University regarding the various options for the central and local activity of the project. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (LATEU), which has direct responsibility to the DVC Education, would house the Business-Education Gateway comprising the central support staff. Academic schools were concerned not to lose their employer contacts and it was decided that support should be given to Schools to develop their own contacts while remaining within a network across the University in order to coordinate our activity and build expertise. The structure of the project will be as follows:

A central team forming the Business-Education Gateway comprising: a business manager, a business link coordinator and clerical support. This team will be managed by the Director of LATEU in order to:

- Create a Business-Education Gateway as a hub for employer engagement activity, internally and externally, virtually and physically.
- Work with co-opted staff to develop new academic processes.

- Organise staff development activities.
- Work with employers through a series of identified sector springboards.¹
- Support staff in the creation of flexibly delivered masters programmes that have been informed by Business through the sector springboards.
- Coordinate business link tutors in the schools.
- Develop business models for flexible M level provision.
- Work with staff and Business in the development of the Design Centre.

At school level, the project will support a member of academic staff, up to a 0.5 post as a Business Link Tutor. This is based on the model of the London Technology Network Business Fellows. The duties of this person will be to:

- Develop an employer engagement framework for their school.
- Coordinate employer engagement enquiries coming into the school.
- Participate in the University Business Link Network, with support of the central team.
- Work on relevant sector springboards.
- Develop processes within the School to facilitate employer engagement.
- Support colleagues develop flexible M level provision and apply co-financing.

At an **interdisciplinary level**, the **Design Centre** with the Schools of Art, Engineering and Management will:

- Be set in an existing building with a repayable grant for the refurbishment of one floor to provide a modern and exciting space.
- Establish a Design Centre Council, comprising academic staff, the UK Design Council and Business leaders to manage its activities.
- Employ a Design Centre Manager, with at least 0.5 of the post being paid for by Business.
- Be fitted with appropriate equipment and space for rapid prototyping, model building, exhibition and corporate facilities.
- Provide teaching staff from both academia and Business.
- Provide innovative education for M level students (including UG masters programmes) and employees to include, for example: interdisciplinary project work initiated by Business, master classes on innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

See Appendices 1 & 2 for more information

2. The Project

Our challenge is to create a framework for employer engagement across the institution for both UG and PG teaching to provide clarity and cohesion internally and externally. In order to do this we need to: (1) reassess current obstacles in our academic processes, (2) create a business-education gateway (virtual & physical) as a central point of contact and outreach, (3) support

¹ Sector springboards will offer an opportunity for employers and the University to elevate engagement and cooperation to a sector, in addition to individual employers. We shall involve SEEDA and the appropriate sector skills councils in order to address sector needs. Elevating to the sector level can reassure Schools that they are not subject to the vagaries of individual employers and offer employers an opportunity to contribute at this level.

and coordinate employer engagement developments at school level, (4) make our M level provision more attractive to employers and employees and (5) create an interdisciplinary design centre that builds on our education and research strengths and enables innovative learning between the university and business.

2.1 The Aims of the Project

The project seeks to establish a coordinated approach to employer engagement to enable our strategic position of being an *Enterprising University*.

The overall aims of the project are to:

1. **Address the current fragmented approach to employer engagement through the:**
 - Business-Education Gateway team elevating activity both externally and internally.
 - Development of an Employer Engagement Framework informed by sector Springboards that promote understanding and confidence between all parties to provide a professional approach to employer engagement.
 - Development of staff with respect to employer engagement.
 - Use of Business Link Tutors in academic schools to professionalise employer engagement at UG and PG level.
 - Coordination of the business link tutor group as a network to strategise employer engagement.
 - Elevation of activity with a Business Manager as a pivot to mobilise engagement with Business, skills agencies and SEEDA through outward facing activities that will form the basis for our Engagement Framework and effective business models that incorporate co-funding mechanisms.
2. **Make changes to our academic processes to enable flexible delivery of M level education that are quality controlled with respect to:**
 - Governance of awards, space, APEL mechanisms, QA procedures,
 - New 'awards' based on the employer Certification Programme and the Career Enhancement Programme for employees – credit accumulation, supporting and monitoring 'roll on - roll off' students ,
 - E-learning frameworks/pedagogy and robust E-assessment procedures, and
 - A credit-based funding mechanism to enable a co-funding charge and a premium for flexibility.
3. **Fund a series of innovative projects** at M level to test cooperation with Business, through appropriate content, flexible delivery and new funding mechanisms.
4. **Establish a Design Centre at Southampton** responding to the needs of employers as expressed in the SEEDA regional economic strategy 2006-2016 which identifies innovation and creativity as a key objective for global competitiveness. The Centre will offer innovative interdisciplinary M level education across Arts, Engineering and Management, led by Business, for Business and together with FT students. It will see the blurring of education – business boundaries. This position aligns with the objectives of the Design Council and through discussions they have given their support along with a number of Businesses (see 2.13 and Appendices 1 and 2).

The project will be comprise three phases: (1) Building and testing flexible academic processes for employer engagement - 2008-2010, (2) Cascading, extending and capacity building – 2010 – 2012, (3) Formalising and integrating employer engagement activity (no funds sought for Phase Three). Each phase comprises a set of work packages and an evaluation. Phase Two will be dependent on the evaluation of the previous phase and adjusted accordingly (see 'Evaluation').

2.2 Phase One Objectives 2008-2010

1. Adapt our academic processes for more flexible delivery at M level with respect to: *work based learning*, *E-distance Learning* and *cross school masters provision* to enable flexible M level education based on credit values.
2. Test adapted academic processes via three pilots with regard to M level provision:
 - work based learning - Nursing – Leadership Capacity Building
 - E-distance learning – Environmental Health
 - credit accumulation of a masters award across schools: - Management, Environmental Science, Education for a Professional Development Masters
3. Address our current fragmented approach to employer engagement through:
 - Engagement of central staff to coordinate activity:
 - a Business Manager (project manager), managed by the Director of LATEU.
 - a Business Link Coordinator as of year 2.
 - 1x 0.25 post for administrative support.
 - Engagement of local staff in schools
 - staged engagement of 8 Business Link Tutors in Schools (funded to 0.5 FT for one year, then 0.25 for subsequent years up to 4 years in total. Four to be appointed in year 1 and four in year 2.)
 - Capacity building for Business Link Tutors akin to the London Technology Network Business Fellows.
 - The development and coordination of a network of University business link tutors
 - Proactive engagement with employers through three sector springboards: Environment, Marine and Creative Industries.
4. Development of business models for co- funding.
5. Refurbishment a floor in the Faraday building to be used for a Design Centre using a repayable grant.
6. A Design Centre for M level education that blurs the boundaries between education and business to deliver creative and innovative multidisciplinary education by business, for business and with our students.

The essence of the project will be one of culture change across the University with regard to Business relations, frameworks for employer engagement, at all levels as well as flexible delivery mechanisms for post-graduate provision. In order to do this, the 'project' will be embedded within existing structures to promote future development and sustainability.

2.3 The Outputs for Phase One

1. Quality assurance guidance on academic processes that enable flexible delivery with regard to: (a) governance of awards, space, APEL mechanisms, QA procedures, work

based learning and distance eLearning (b) new 'awards' based on an agreed employer Certification Programme, (c) career enhancement programme for employees (credit accumulation).

2. A Business-Education Gateway that has formalised external and internal relations.
3. Three Sector springboards in place with representatives from the South East Economic Development Agency, skills sector representatives, 10 businesses per springboard to be invited. Sectors to include: Marine, Environment and Creative Industries.
4. An Employer Engagement Framework that can be adapted by Schools.
5. Eight Business Link tutors in place within Schools who have developed an employer engagement framework for their School and contacted five new businesses in a relevant sector.
6. A business link tutor network for coordinated activity internally and across sector springboards.
7. Three pilot masters exploring: work based learning, E-distance learning and cross school credit accumulation masters.
8. Development of business models for co-funding.
9. Completion of infrastructure for the Design Centre and plans for equipment needed, management and educational provision in Phase Two.
10. Enrol 60 new M level FTE students on to flexible credit-based courses, co-funded by employers.

2.4 Measuring the Outputs for Phase One

Output	Success measured by...	Timescale
1. Academic processes that enables flexible delivery for a credit-based system at M level.	Appropriate student record system for cross school credit accumulation, (evaluated by admin and academic staff).	8 months into project
	QA processes to accredit work based learning. (evaluated by University staff).	10 months into project
	QA processes for E-distance learning. (evaluated by University staff).	18 months into project
	Academic school offices' record system for part time PGT students, (evaluated by students and admin staff in the Schools).	18 months into project
	A set process within the University to gain help in eLearning design, (evaluated by person offering this service in LATEU and academic staff).	12-18 months into project
	A set of professional procedures/templates that can be used for eLearning materials, (evaluated by LATEU staff and academic staff).	12 months into project

2. Establish a Business-Education Gateway – virtually as a website and physically in the Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit.	Develop an information system for a website for employers and for internally for staff	6 months into project, but ongoing
3. Three sector springboards in place with representatives from the South East Economic Development Area, Skills sector representatives, 10 businesses per springboard invited.	<p>Include: Marine, Environment and Creative Industries as sectors for initial Springboards (evaluated by membership of Springboards).</p> <p>Individual meetings with employers in sectors plus sector meetings (springboards) to agree strategies with respect to graduate workforce recruitment and development (evaluated by employers).</p>	<p>6 months into project</p> <p>On going</p>
4. An Employer Engagement Framework	Initial framework produced centrally and then adapted by Business Link tutors	10 months into project
5. Eight business link tutors in place within Schools.	<p>Developed an employer engagement framework for their School and contacted 5 new businesses in a relevant sector.</p> <p>Coordinate employer engagement activity within their school.</p> <p>Rated by businesses, Head of School.</p>	End of phase one
6. Business link tutor network	<p>Network in place with regular meetings.</p> <p>Rated by Business Manager with respect to tutor engagement in the Network and by business link tutors regarding the usefulness of the network.</p>	End of phase one
7. Three pilot masters	<p>Development of masters and accepted by school and faculty,</p> <p>Masters advertised</p> <p>Students enrol</p> <p>Systems in place to monitor roll on – roll off students</p> <p>Education rated by employers and students.</p> <p>Rating of the viability of the academic processes for work based learning, E-distance</p>	End of phase one

	learning and credit accumulation.	
8. Development of business models for co-funding, based on 50:50 for public sector and 70:30 for private sector.	Funding models accepted by schools Pilot masters adopt co-funding model	18 months into project
9. Completion of infrastructure for the Design Centre and plans for equipment needed.	Established Design Centre Council Space rated by Design Centre Council Management structure and education provision established	18 months into project 20 months into project
10. Enrol 60 new FTE students on to flexible master's level modules.	Students enrolled on a modular basis for the equivalent of 60 FTEs	22 months into project

2.5 Evaluation of Phase One

Funds for a research fellow are sought for the final 8 months of phase one to evaluate this phase with respect to the aims of the project, the suitability of the objectives for those aims and the final outputs.

2.6 Impact Assessment of Outputs for Phase One

Output	Impact
1. Academic processes that enable flexible delivery for a credit-based system at M level.	This will provide a University-wide change to our academic processes and facilitate employer engagement activity. At present staff need to work around the system in order to make employer engagement happen. It is imperative that this is an efficient system and does not place extra burden on staff.
2. Establish a Business-Education Gateway – virtually as a website and physically as a team in the Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit.	Internally this will be the hub of all things connected with employer engagement. Externally this will provide a point of contact, give a professional service and direct employers to the correct place.
3. Three sector springboards in place with representatives from the South East Economic Development Area, Skill sector representatives, 10 businesses per springboard invited.	This will impact across various sectors, regionally and within the University.
4. An Employer Engagement Framework	This will become a formal document within Schools for employer engagement, setting out modes of engagement, processes and procedures.

5. Eight business link tutors in place within Schools.	Internally within their school regarding coordination and externally giving employers a point of contact within the school.
6. Business link tutor network	Internally with respect to support for business link tutors and strategically in terms of understanding the nature of our employer engagement.
7. Three pilot masters	This impacts within the school, across the university in terms of new process and externally with employers who gain access to flexible PG training.
8. Development of business models for co-funding, based on 50:50 for public sector and 80:20 for private sector.	Impact is internal with regard to our pricing policy and with HEFCE regarding co-funding.
9. Completion of infrastructure for the Design Centre and plans for equipment needed.	Impact internally with respect to the refurbishment and externally with respect to an innovation hub for a variety of employers within the region.
10. Enrol 60 new FTE students on to flexible master's level modules.	Impact on the Schools concerned and employers/employees.

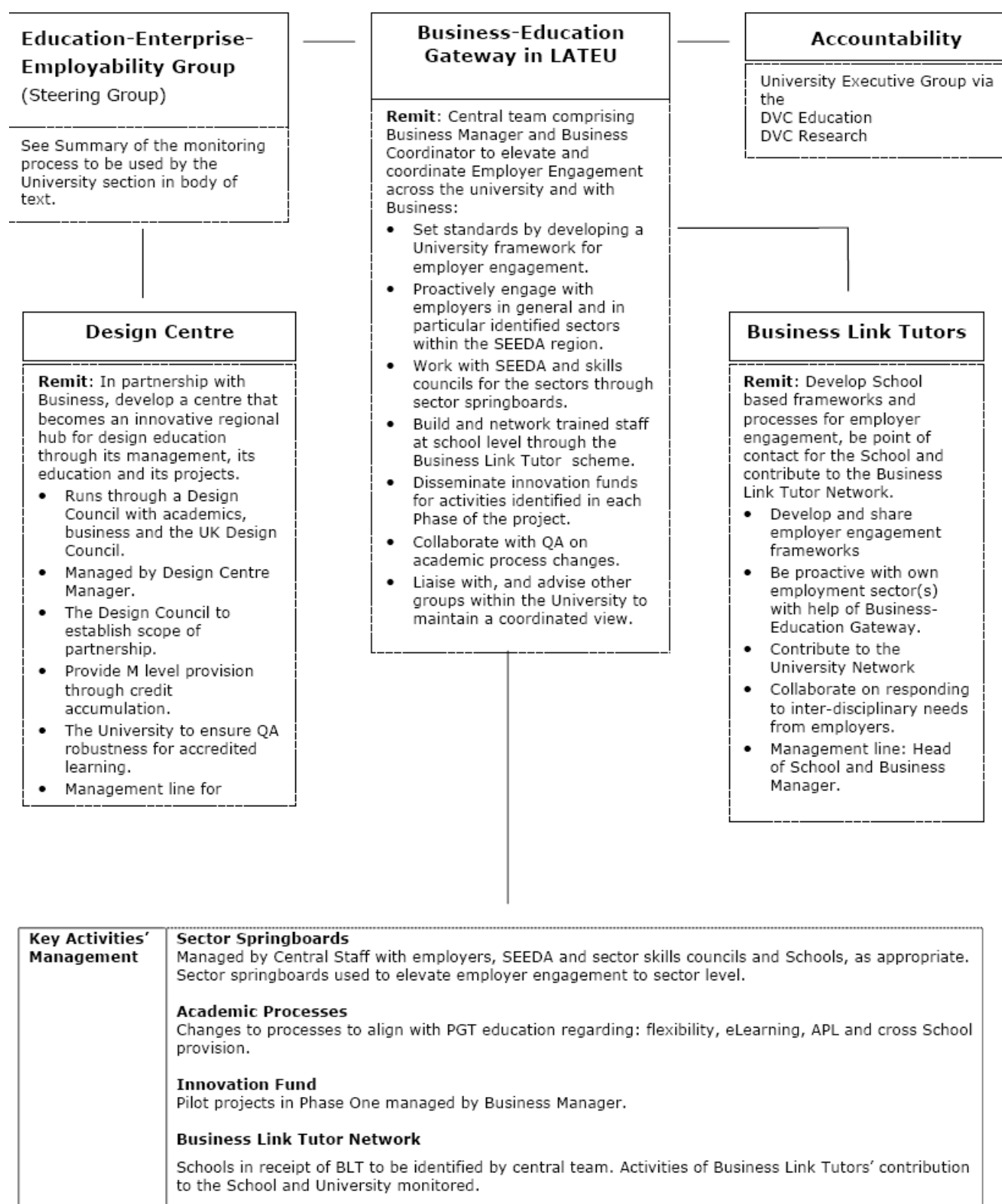
2.7 Managing the Risks associated with Phase One

Risk and Impact level: high (h), medium (m) or low (l).

Risk	Risk Level	Managing the Risk	Impact
1. The adapted academic processes will not be flexible enough to deliver the flexibility we need.	L	Work with our QAA regional representative to find robust solutions that enable flexibility and quality control. We are aware that QAA are concerned about QA with respect to certain aspects of employer engagement.	M
2. Schools/academic staff will not be interested in developing flexible delivery, be that block teaching face-to-face or distance/eLearning.	H	Since this is a culture change project, there will be a need for change management. Having the 'project' reside in LATEU lends admirably for this via the development of champions in the first instance, staff development, the Springboards and of course the payment of Business Link Tutor at School level.	H
3. Business will contribute less than expected to the Springboards.	M	The Business Link Coordinator and the Network need to be very clear what is wanted from these Springboards. Agendas and actions need to be firmly identified. Membership of the group is predicated on this.	H

4. Business link tutors only answer to their School and are not interested in working with the network.	L	Money for Business Link Tutors will be issued on a half yearly basis and dependent on their commitment to the job in the School and the network.	L
5. Inability to find anyone from Business to support running the Design Centre or be part of the management group.	L	We will discuss with the relevant Springboards regarding this and if they are happy that an existing academic is bought out to run this, then we will accept that.	M
6. Inability to find people from Business to contribute to Design Centre modules.	L	Not all teaching will be run by business, we do have in-house expertise. We may have to run initially with in-house staff and bring Business in as they see the benefit. The Springboards will be used to discuss the value of the Design Centre and what is needed by Business.	M
7. Business will not be interested in any co-funding models.	H	We will offer a sliding scale of engagement and funding where funding can be in-kind as well as money. We will be working with sectors and gaining their views for funding workforce development and consider a funding consortium.	H
8. Business will not contribute effectively as visiting lecturers or student mentors to modular programmes or the Certification Programme.	L	If Business does not see the need for a workforce Certification Programme, then we will postpone it. We will continue with the modular approach for flexible access to PG education.	M
9. Students will not be interested in the concept of a Career Enhancement modular approach.	L	If students themselves are not interested in Career Enhancement, their employers probably will be. We will keep dialogue open, via the Springboards to maintain currency of the modules on offer.	H
10. The business sector and students lose confidence in the awards due to the modular, accumulation approach.	L	Ensure governance for awards via our quality assurance processes are robust, processes are monitored and the external examiners system is adjusted accordingly.	H

2.8 Governance and Management of the Project



2.9 Commentary on information provided in the key milestone plan

Eight milestones have been identified for Phase One of the project. Although all milestones have risks attached to them, we feel we have found suitable measure to counteract these risks and none appear insurmountable.

2.10 Summary of the monitoring process to be used by the University

The University has set up an Education-Enterprise-Education Employability group which has been accepted by the University Education Policy Committee in October 2007. The remit of the group is below and offers that strategic overview of employer engagement activities across the University. The Business Manager and Business Link Coordinator would be responsible to the Director of LATEU and a member of EEE group (see below).

Education-Enterprise-Employability Group

Terms of reference

1. The EEE group will contribute to University strategic policy relating to education, enterprise and employability.
2. The EEE group will have strategic oversight of interaction between all parties within the University involved at the interface between education, enterprise and employability.
3. The EEE group will stay abreast of national and regional initiatives to enable the University to be proactively engaged and maximize opportunities.
4. The EEE group oversee employer engagement initiatives, community activity and student employability statistics.
5. The EEE group will report to both the Education Policy Committee and the Enterprise Leadership Group.

Membership

DVC Education (chair) | LATEU representative | LTC with Employability Lead | Associate Deans Education | Associate Deans Enterprise | Collaborative Partnerships Manager, | Research and Enterprise Services | Director of the Careers Service | Director of Corporate Relationships | Business-Education Gateway Manager

The central support team (two FTE appointments and co-opted staff currently in LATEU) will be managed by the director of the Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit. This central position affords the team access to the whole University as well as being in direct line to the DVC Education.

2.11 Dissemination and value of the project for the HE Sector

Outcomes from this project will be disseminated through Higher Education Academy events with papers written in appropriate journals. Our experience will be shared with the UK Design Council and their network activities. We will formally consult with our local MP, John Denham, in his capacity as Minister for Innovation, Universities and Skills, on our experiences.

With respect to the HE sector, the project will contribute to (a) the development of flexible credit-based system with respect to the building of academic processes and funding models (Burgess Report, 87+, HEFCE, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/faq/tfm.htm#q4>). In addition we will contribute to the Leitch Review (3.64/5) with respect to skills required at level 5.

2.12 Sustainability of the project

The sustainability of the project rests on our ability to use this funding to set up processes that we can take over once operational.

The processes involve:

1. **Changes to our academic processes.** Once these processes have been adapted, they will be available for all schools. QA procedures for flexible delivery in terms of work based learning, eLearning, credit accumulation will be part of our QA handbook and available to all schools.
2. **Central staff in LATEU to maintain the Business-Education Gateway**
 - The Business Manager will be appointed from the outset of the project. This role will continue into the second phase and the University would take on this post beyond the project period.
 - The Business Link Tutor will be appointed in the second year. The University would then take on the business link tutor for the second phase and beyond the project period.
 - The team will stay abreast of all developments in this field in order to maintain currency and coherence of our activities.
3. **Business Link Tutors** will be phased in and identified Schools given 0.5 FT post in the first year to enable the setting up of procedures. They will continue with a 0.25 FT post for the remainder of the project. This activity would remain in schools as part of an academic's administrative duties and may rotate on a 5 yearly basis as with admissions tutors currently at the University. The pattern is as follows:

	Phase 1		Phase 2	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
New Business Link Tutor	4	4	2	2
Funding for	4@0.5	4@0.5 4@0.25	2@0.5 8@0.25	2@0.5 10@0.25
Total Business Link Tutors	4	8	10	12

4. **Staff Development** activity will remain and become part of the University's Professional Development Programme within LATEU.
5. **Sector Springboards.** Once established, these springboards will meet on a biannual basis and organised by the Business Education Gateway staff and Schools. Schools will also have more established links with the sector that they can continue to develop.
6. **The Design Centre** will be in partnership with employers within the region and become an established hub of creative activity for prototype development and workforce development. SMEs should be able to continue to take advantage of an area of training not usually open to them. Funds will accrue via flexible PG education and projects with Business.

7. **Funding** The funding of the students via HEFCE and employer fees will allow a sizeable population of employees to train and make academic progress. This is the core of long term financial sustainability (see also the option appraisal spreadsheet).

2.13 Employer Support

Letters of support are in Appendix 3

General Support

The Environmental Health pilot has gained support from: The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Eastleigh Borough Council, New Forest District Council and the Gosport Borough Council. The nursing pilot has support from Southampton City NHS (see Appendix 3).

Marine South East, the SEEDA Sector Consortia, has given full support to the Marine Sector Springboard and would like to run it in partnership with the University of Southampton. We are also in discussions with Gurit, based in the Isle of Wight, regarding their workforce development needs.

Design Centre

We have been in discussions with the Design Council, Jesse Balgrave and they are supportive of the Design Centre and feel that our approach to working in partnership with industry is the correct one and they would happily be part of our design centre management group during phase network of institutions with similar centres. For information on the Design Centre see Appendix 2.

We have letters of support from: Arup, Atkins International, Buro Happold, Laing O'Rourke, Ordnance Survey, Rolls Royce, Pfizer, Meaning and Snap (see Appendix 3).

2.14 Phase Two: Expanding Networks and Partnerships 2010- 2012

Initially we are seeking funds for Phase One of the project and on a successful evaluation we aim to apply for further funds to expand the employer engagement work through:

- Formalising the role of employer engagement through the Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit with the Business Manager and the Business Link Coordinator (supplied by the University).
- Operationalising the Design Centre.
- Extending our support for Schools with 4 more 0.5 posts as Business Link Tutors (2 per year scaling down to 0.25 FT after one year).
- Extending staff development in the area of employer engagement.
- Extending our range of sectors within the SEEDA region.
- Extending the number of flexible masters programmes in conjunction with employers.
- Extending operational employer engagement framework to all schools.
- Providing innovation funds for employer engagement projects.

3. Financial Plan

3.1 Financial Tables

Table 1: Recurrent funding	AY 2008-09 £'000	AY 2009-10 £'000	AY 2010-11 £'000	AY 2011-12 £'000	Total £'000
HEI own funds	163.2	307.8	328.6 Subject to Phase 2 bid	405.3 Subject to Phase 2 bid	1,204.9 Phase 1 471.0 Phase 2 733.9
HEFCE SDF grant (show repayments of repayable grant as negative figures)	325.3 (non-repayable)	469.4	466.4 Subject to phase 2 bid	544.1 Subject to phase 2 bid	1,805.2 (non-repayable) Phase 1 794.7 Phase 2 1,010.5
HEFCE other grant	0	0	0	0	0
Other 1 Employer Contribution – Teaching Resources			62.5 Subject to phase 2 bid	62.5 Subject to Phase 2 bid	125
Other 2 (name source) [add additional lines as necessary]					
Total	488.5	777.2	857.5	1,011.9	3,135.1

Table 2: Capital funding	AY 2008-09 £'000	AY 2009-10 £'000	AY 2010-11 £'000	AY 2011-12 £'000	Total £'000
HEI own funds	500.0			240.0	740.0
HEFCE SDF grant (show repayments of repayable grant as negative figures)	1200.0			(240.0)	960.0 (further repaymen due 2012/ – 2015/16
HEFCE other grant					
Other 1 (name source)					
Other 2 (name source) [add additional lines as necessary]					
Total	1700.0			0	1,700.0

Table 3: Total (Table 1 plus 2)	AY 2008-09 £'000	AY 2009-10 £'000	AY 2010-11 £'000	AY 2010-12 £'000	Total £'000
All sources	2,188.5	777.2	857.5	1,011.9	4,835.1

3.2 Budget Plan for Phase One

		2008 £k	2009 £k	Total	HEFCE	Uni
Central Staff Salary						
Business Manager	100%	54.4	57.4	111.8	111.8	
Business Coordinator	100%		42.5	42.5	42.5	
Admin Support	25%	7.2	7.6	14.8	14.8	
Staff from LATEU						
Academic processes	20%	7.3	7.7	15.0	15.0	
Staff development		1.0	1.0	2.0		
Staff in Schools						
Business link tutors		122.4	189.0	311.4	311.4	
Sector Springboards x3						
Marketing/printing		9.0	9.3	18.3	18.3	
Hospitality		9.0	9.03	18.3	18.3	
Travel (regional)		3.0	3.1	6.1	6.1	
Recurrent						
Office equipment		4.0		4.0	4.0	
Office consumables		5.0	5.1	10.1	10.1	
Innovation fund for pilots		100.0	103.0	203.0	203.0	
Design Centre						
Admin support			3.2	3.2	3.2	
Hospitality/travel		4.0	4.1	8.1	8.1	
Estate charges		55.0	103.8	158.9		158.9
Indirect costs		107.2	203.0	310.2		310.2
Capital costs						
Infrastructure changes to floor for Design Centre as a repayable grant – repayment to start 2012.		1,200.0		1,200.0	1,200.0	
Evaluation first Phase						
8 month contract for senior researcher			28.1	28.1	28.1	
SUB TOTAL		488.5	777.2	1,265.8	794.7	471.1
TOTAL WITH REPAYABLE GRANT					1,994.7	

3.3 Value for money

describe the approach to procurement

The capital element is devoted to the creation of space in the Faraday Tower. This is an ambitious project to revitalise a 12 - storey tower on the Highfield site. It has been successfully submitted as a University SRIF 2006 – 2008 project. The building contract has been let under the University's procurement rules and will be on the basis of a two stage tender.

The University is contributing the indirect cost elements of the project on a FEC basis – this means that the HEFCE contribution will be used directly to develop the academic aspects of the project.

3.4 Governing body approval confirmation

The University Executive Group has approved this project, with full support, at its meeting on 16 October 2007. The Standing Committee of Council fully endorsed the project at its meeting of 8 November, 2007.

4. Matching HEFCE Criteria and Strategic Priorities

Links to the SDF criteria and our strategic priorities, and hence the rationale for our investment. SDF criteria are listed in paragraph 11 of the main text, and our strategic priorities are reflected in our strategic plan, 'HEFCE strategic plan 2006-11' (HEFCE 2006/13).

4.1 Strategic References

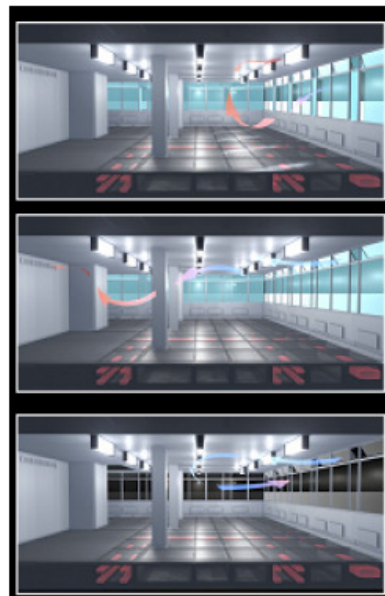
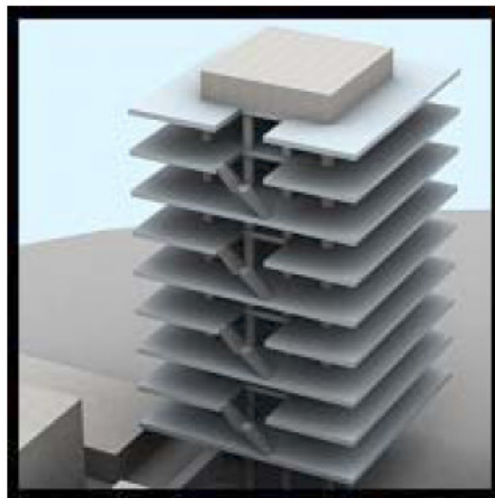
HEFCE Strategy Reference	Point	How project addresses this
HEFCE strategic plan 2006-11	18. "A sustainable high quality sector - ... each HEI should build on its own strengths..."	The re-engineering of PGT provision for flexible demand led education. Our comparative advantage is at M level since we are a research led University.
	20 "... supporting the sector in continuously developing its leadership, governance and management, and through that in building the capacity and capability of staff."	We wish to address our academic processes at M level to enable a flexible credit based approach with robust QA procedures and support mechanisms in place for 'roll on-roll-off' learners.
	32 "Working in Partnership to recognise: ... the needs of employers for the high-level skills required to compete in a global knowledge economy."	Sector Springboards, Business Link Tutors at central and academic school level are in place to engage with Business in a strategic manner. The Design Centre is innovative (teaching, management & projects) which blurs the boundaries between education & business.
Employer Engagement: HEFCE Strategy	5 strands 1. flexible lifelong learning 2. Enhancing Employability 3. Co-funding partnerships 4. Meeting the demand for higher level skills 5. work based learning	1. flexible PGT that is credit-based. 2. the Business Link Tutors working in an academic school and with their sector(s) to develop the curriculum. 3. Co-funding on credit based M level provision will be established. 4. PGT – level 5 (see also Leitch 3.64/5)

		5. One pilot will develop our processes for work based learning.
HEFCE eLearning Strategy 2005	24 "We will seek to support institutions in the strategic planning, change management and process development that are necessary to underpin their development and embedding of e-learning."	One aspect of flexible provision will be eLearning. We will implement our eLearning strategy and co-opt existing staff to enable good pedagogy and robust e-assessment.
	26 "... we will seek through our strategy to support lifelong learning by joining up our strategy with those of other sectors of education, enabling connections between academic learning and experiential learning in the workplace and other aspects of life. "	The use of eLearning delivery to enable lifelong learning for both employer and learner. It will also enable pilots on the work-based learning programme.

Images of the Faraday Building for the Proposed Design Centre



Architect images for the new Faraday building



The Design Centre at Southampton

The Facts

The value of design to the UK economy is over 12 billion with some 300000 people directly engaged in design activity (Design in Britain, Facts Figures and Quotes 2000/2001, Design Council).

Shares in design-led businesses have outperformed the FTSE 100 by more than 200% over the past decade ("Design in Britain 2005-06", The Design Council).

According to the CBI, 26% of manufacturers said that their product lifespan is less than 3 years compared with 14% in 1996, thus placing greater emphasis on fast and efficient design capabilities (Ernst and Young, Enterprise Survey, 2000).

Chairmen, managing directors and financial directors from FTSE 500 companies were asked to name three countries that they thought were the most innovative. 95% named the USA, 66% named Britain, 40% cited Japan and 22% included Germany. (MORI/3M Captains of industry survey, 1999).

The UK's design industry is booming. The 1999 fee income for the countries top 100 design consultancies was up by 20% on 1998 to £490m. (Design week top 100 consultancy survey, March 2003)

Design and technology is a mandatory subject at GCSE level and is very popular with young people. Numbers of pupils taking design and technology A level increased by 8% between 1998 and 2003. (Department for Education and Employment, 1999, 2000).

SEEDA Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2016 identifies innovation and creativity as a key objective for global competitiveness.

The Challenge



Successful products, buildings and environments are increasingly characterized by style, strong branding, aesthetic appeal, and innovation. Design organisations that seek to become internationally leading need to recruit and develop staff to achieve outstanding design capabilities. Increasingly this demands both a deep understanding of a particular, perhaps specialist, discipline but also a holistic appreciation of the subtle balance of factors that combine to achieve market supremacy through good design.

Southampton University is a world class university, ranking within the top 150 world universities, according to a Times Higher survey in 2006 and 14th nationally (Times Good University guide, 2007). Southampton is the only UK university in which every engineering department has a top research quality rating of 5* and the UK's leading university for engineering. As a University, we are not complacent and wish to improve by exploiting our strengths and working with business for our mutual benefit.

Employers acknowledge the excellent specialist discipline skills of our graduates and we do not wish to jeopardize this. However, there is a recognition that a broader set of multidisciplinary skills could only be beneficial. The Design Centre at Southampton will work with students at M level and with 'work-based' employees (post experience students) who already have a good technical grounding upon which to develop.

Combining technical and creative skills is a challenge for industry and larger companies may run expensive internal graduate training schemes while smaller organisations, while benefiting from such training, may find it difficult to find the right opportunity.

The Opportunity



Many of Southampton's degree programmes are now of 4 years in duration, allowing students to exploit the specialist knowledge gained earlier in the course in a broader context through team-based design activities in their fourth year (M level).

Southampton believes that student multidisciplinary teams that work on rounded business-focused projects are an asset. However, without a dedicated and inspiring environment to work in, this potential is lost. A floor in the refurbished iconic Faraday Building will offer such an inspiring space and we are seeking funds from the Higher Education Funding Council to enable this.

The Aims



The aims of the Design Centre at Southampton are to:

Create a multidisciplinary centre spanning a very wide range of disciplines including art, business, civil engineering, architecture, built environment, mechatronics and manufacturing.

Provide an inspiring and motivating environment tailored to the needs of design teams.

Collaborate with business in the provision of this education.

House world class examples of physical and other artefacts produced by UK-based organisations which demonstrate the pivotal impact of good design.

Host visiting experts from UK and international businesses to participate in the delivery of master classes through workshops and projects available to masters level students and employers.

Provide a base for post-experience training (workforce development) and student project work.

Pioneer and experiment with novel ways of collaborative working using computers, workspaces, organisational frameworks, and business processes.

Exploit the latest "state of the art" rapid prototyping tools, reverse engineering tools and artefact creation facilities.

Annexe B Summary document



Employer Engagement Initiative Summary Document Annex B

Institution leading the proposal:	University of Southampton
Contact person for the proposal: Title and full name: Post: Address for correspondence: Telephone: e-mail:	Pat Maier Senior Educational Developer School of Civil Engineering and the Environment, Building 7, Highfield Campus, Southampton, S017 1BJ 02380 59 22663 pjm@soton.ac.uk
Other institutions involved	Not appropriate
Project title:	Employer Engagement Initiative

1. Project Description and Overall Aims

Please note that 'Business' is being used to cover both public and private sectors.

Our current approach to Employer Engagement in education is fragmented and requires strengthening through more flexible academic processes and a relationship with Business that is mutually beneficial. The project is intended to adapt our academic processes to facilitate this engagement and agree with Business and academic schools an Employer Engagement Framework around which all employer engagement activity, at both UG and PG level, can be formalised. To enable this, a Business-Education Gateway and sector springboards will be established in the Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit as an outreach mechanism that will build mutual confidence and initiate changes between the University and Business.

As a research intensive university, we see post graduate teaching as our comparative advantage and wish to make specific changes at this level to facilitate flexible specialist training for employers and employees which have been informed by employers and sector springboards. The sector springboards will enable us to elevate our activity from individual employers to sectors together with SEEDA and the skills councils. The re-engineering of our M level courses will address accessibility for workforce development, be that a single module Certification Programme for employers, or a Career Enhancement Programme for employees. These changes will be built into our masters' provision, affording credit accumulation. In Phase One of the project we will trial this approach with three of pilots: Masters in Environmental Health (E-distance earning), Leadership Capacity Building in the NHS (WBL) and Professional Studies (cross-School flexible credit accumulation).

Southampton is one of the leading UK universities in engineering and employers acknowledge the excellent specialist discipline skills of our graduates. However, there is a recognition that a broader set of interdisciplinary skills would be beneficial. An Ernst & Young Enterprise Survey in 2000 reported that according to the CBI, 26% of manufacturers said that their product lifespan is less than 3 years compared with 14% in 1996, thus placing greater emphasis on fast and efficient design capabilities and the ability to manage rapid change. Our project

therefore will include a Design Centre that will work directly with Business to provide innovative interdisciplinary M level education (Schools of Art, Engineering and Management) that will blur the education-business interface. This aspect of the project will gear up our approach to employer engagement through business involvement in its running, educational provision, project work and workforce development. This will be a regional innovation hub for prototype design education and our flagship to employer engagement. In Phase One we are seeking a repayable grant of £1.2 million for infrastructural changes to an existing building. During this initial phase the full specification for business-university activity and equipment will be developed.

The project will comprise two phases: Phase One: *Building flexible academic structures for employer engagement, 2008-2010* and Phase Two: *Cascading, extending and capacity building, 2010-2012*. Through the changes engendered by the project, we estimate an extra 60 whole time equivalent M level students during Phase One (2008-2010), leading to a total of 220 (steady state) FTEs by the end of Phase Two (2010-2012).

The overall aims of the project are to:

- 1. Address the current fragmented approach to employer engagement through:** (a) a Business Education Gateway interfacing both externally and internally, virtually and physically, (b) the development of an Employer Engagement Framework enabled through sector Springboards that promote understanding and confidence between all parties to provide a professional approach to employer engagement, (c) the development of staff with respect to employer engagement, (d) the use of Business Link Tutors in academic schools to professionalise employer engagement at UG and Postgraduate level, (e) the coordination of the business link tutor group as a network to strategise employer engagement, (f) elevate activity through a Business Manager as a pivot to mobilise engagement with Business and skills agencies through outward facing activities that will form the basis for our Engagement Framework and effective business models.
- 2. Make changes to our academic processes to enable flexible delivery of M level education, with respect to:** (a) governance of awards, space, APEL mechanisms, QA procedures, (b) new 'award' based on the employer Certification Programme and the Career Enhancement Programme for employees – credit accumulation, supporting and monitoring 'roll on - roll off' students, (c) E-learning frameworks/pedagogy and robust E-assessment procedures, and (d) a credit-based funding mechanism to include a co-funding charge and a premium for flexibility.
- 3. Fund a 3 pilot projects** at M level to test cooperation with Business, through content, flexible delivery and new funding mechanisms with respect to: WBL (Nursing: Leadership Capacity Building), E-distance learning (Environmental Health) and Credit Accumulation (Cross School Masters in Professional Development.)
- 4. Establish a Design Centre at Southampton** responding to the needs of employers as expressed in the SEEDA regional economic strategy 2006-2016 which identifies innovation and creativity as a key objective for global competitiveness. The Centre will offer innovative interdisciplinary M level education across Arts, Engineering and Management, led by Business, for Business and together with Foundation students. It will see the blurring of education – business boundaries.

We are seeking **£794,700 in Phase One** in addition to a repayable grant of £1.2m for the Design Centre with repayments starting in 2012.

2. The Project Match to HEFCE's SDF Strategic Priorities

The initiative addresses the following aspects of HEFCE strategies:

HEFCE Strategy Reference	Point	How project addresses this
HEFCE strategic plan 2006-11	18. "A sustainable high quality sector - ... each HEI should build on its own strengths..."	The re-engineering of PGT provision for flexible demand led education. Our comparative advantage is at M level since we are a research led University.

	20 "... supporting the sector in continuously developing its leadership, governance and management, and through that in building the capacity and capability of staff."	We wish to address our academic processes at M level to enable a flexible credit based approach with robust QA procedures and support mechanisms in place for 'roll on-roll-off' learners.
	32 "Working in Partnership to recognise: ...the needs of employers for the high-level skills required to compete in a global knowledge economy."	Sector Springboards, Business Link Tutors at central and academic school level are in place to engage with Business in a strategic manner. The Design Centre is innovative (teaching, management & projects) which blurs the boundaries between education & business.
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HEFCE eLearning Strategy 2005	24 "We will seek to support institutions in the strategic planning, change management and process development that are necessary to underpin their development and embedding of e-learning."	One aspect of flexible provision will be eLearning. We will implement our eLearning strategy and co-opt existing staff to enable good pedagogy and robust e-assessment.
	26 "... we will seek through our strategy to support lifelong learning by joining up our strategy with those of other sectors of education, enabling connections between academic learning and experiential learning in the workplace and other aspects of life. "	The use of eLearning delivery to enable lifelong learning for both employer and learner. It will also enable pilots on the work-based learning programme.

3. How this project fits with the institution's strategy, including contribution to strategic development of the sector as a whole

The **Corporate Strategy** of the University of Southampton is intended to establish the means whereby the University achieves a position among the top ten universities in the UK as judged by recognised measures of excellence for research, education and enterprise. The **University's Enterprise Strategy** (October 2007) has more closely defined how the University will move forward as an *Enterprising University*. With respect to PG education, the drivers for change are the cost implications for learners already in work and the need to offer flexible and targeted courses that have direct benefit to the end users. We see employability as a key driver that will impact on the success of the University through the provision of direct benefits to business and the region. Our priorities for action in education are: (1) To develop curricula that are more responsive to external need, and speed internal processes related to curriculum development, (2) To generate ownership and understanding of the role for Enterprise in Education and (3) To define the roles and responsibility of School-based Enterprise Staff and promote and run staff development to "build staff capacity for enterprise". Our **Learning and Teaching Strategy** (2006-2010) concentrates on the development of: Student-centred, research-led learning, Employability, Inclusivity, Staff development and reward, and Building the infrastructure for education.

With respect to the HE sector, it is felt that this project will contribute to (a) the development of flexible credit-based system with respect to the building of academic processes and funding models (Burgess Report, 87+, HEFCE, <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/faq/tfm.htm#q4>). In addition we would contribute to the Leitch Review (3.64/5) with respect to skills required at level 5.

The University is seeking to develop our estate and make more intensive usage of the very large investment that we are making. Part of this thrust is to extend the volume of teaching activity within the existing estate envelope. The more flexible provision of Masters level education will enable this to be accomplished.

4. Additional student numbers required

We aim for an increase in our student numbers (whole time equivalents) as follows:

Year	Band B	Band C	Total
2008/09			
2009/10	50	10	60
2010/11	115	25	140
2011/12 Steady State	170	50	220

5. Total project costs and funding per year (on an fEC basis)

Table 1: Recurrent funding	AY 2008-09 £'000	AY 2009-10 £'000	AY 2010-11 £'000	AY 2011-12 £'000	Total £'000
HEI own funds	163.2	307.8	328.6 Subject to Phase 2 bid	405.3 Subject to Phase 2 bid	1,204.9 Phase 1 471.0 Phase 2 733.9
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Total	488.5	777.2	857.5	1,011.9	3,135.1

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HEFCE other grant					
Other 1 (name source)					
Other 2 (name source) [add additional lines as necessary]					
Total	1700.0			0	1,700.0

Table 3: Total (Table 1 plus 2)	AY 2008-09 £'000	AY 2009-10 £'000	AY 2010-11 £'000	AY 2010-12 £'000	Total £'000
All sources	2,188.5	777.2	857.5	1,011.9	4,835.1

6. Leverage: The amount of SDF funding needed to secure the necessary level of funding from other partners. We would look for progressively higher contributions from employers in terms of teaching resources. As our thinking on Phase Two develops, and the success of Phase One is demonstrated, we would seek greater contributions particularly in the establishment of the Design Centre.

7. Project Risks - *significant risks to the project and how they will be managed*

Risk	Risk Level	Managing the Risk	Impact
Schools/academic staff will not be interested in developing flexible delivery, be that block teaching face-to-face or distance/eLearning.	H	Since this is a culture change project, there will be a need for change management. Having the 'project' reside in the Learning & Teaching Unit will enable this, as it is a central unit, leading on educational development and reporting directly to the DVC Education. This will be supported via the development of champions, staff development, the Springboards and the Business Link Tutor network, originating at School level.	H
Business will contribute less than expected to the Springboards.	M	The Business Link Coordinator and the Network need to be very clear what is wanted from these Springboards. Agendas and actions need to be firmly identified. Membership of the group is predicated on this.	H
Business will not be interested in any co-funding models.	H	We will offer a sliding scale of engagement and funding where funding can be in-kind as well as money. We will be working with sectors and gaining their views for funding workforce development and consider a funding consortium.	H

8. Value for money (for example, describe the approach to procurement)

The capital element is devoted to the creation of space in the Faraday Tower. This is an ambitious project to revitalise a 12 storey tower on the Highfield site. It has been successfully submitted as a University SRIF 2006 – 2008 project. The building contract has been let under the University's procurement rules and will be on the basis of a two stage tender.

The University is contributing the indirect cost elements of the project on a FEC basis – this means that the HEFCE contribution will be used directly to develop the academic aspects of the project.

9. Confirmation of approval by the head of the institution

Vice Chancellor, Professor Bill Wakeham

Signature _____ date: _____

**Appendix B Employer Engagement Initiative
Evaluation Report: Phase 1**

**Employer Engagement Initiative:
Evaluation Report Phase 1**

September 2008 – April 2009

**Brenda Johnston and Alison
Fuller**

Employer Engagement Initiative

Evaluation Report Phase 1 September 2008–April 2009

1. Background

The Employer Engagement Initiative at the University of Southampton aims to increase the University's ability to offer flexible education in order to facilitate employee learning, address employer needs, and contribute to the long-term development of the University. It will do this via a range of inter-related initiatives which aim to develop:

- internal processes that are responsive to employee and employer learning needs;
- internal structures to enable the strategic development and support of employer engagement activities;
- mechanisms for improved engagement with employers.

The initiatives include the development of pilot flexible programmes of learning at Masters level as well as Sector Springboards which develop closer contacts with employers in areas where the University has existing expertise. In the long term, the innovation projects should increase the University's ability to develop work-based learning, online/distance learning and flexible programmes at Masters level.

The role of the evaluation in Phase 1 is to provide ongoing formative evaluation to the Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI). Our focus is to assist the development of the project by acting in the role of 'critical friend'. We aim to be as open as possible about processes and evolving understandings within the limits imposed by the need for confidentiality for the people we interview in the course of the evaluation. Together with the EEI team members, we aim to work out how our formative evaluation can best contribute to the achievement of the Initiative's aims.

Our remit is to *evaluate* the changes arising out of EEI project activity, including exploration of cultural change (e.g. factors inhibiting/facilitating cultural change as regards employer engagement, and the mixed goals for the main people involved). We aim to use our role to identify 'lessons learned' and their implications for strengthening the Initiative. In contrast, the EEI managers/team members have responsibility for *monitoring* project outputs and meeting targets (i.e. concrete indicators of progress as described in the EEI proposal (Annexe A, Business Plan Contents, p.7–9), although they will, of course, be reflecting on how the Initiative is developing. Progress in relation to these 'performance indicators' will feed into the evaluation.

The purposes of this phase of the evaluation have been to:

- improve our (evaluator) understandings of this complex Initiative;
- provide a baseline understanding for the EEI team of the project's starting points in terms of positions, expectations and feelings of the various people involved. What has been happening and how do people feel about it?
- provide some initial, tentative feedback on progress of the Initiative;
- inform the design of the second phase of the evaluation.

The aim of this report is to provide a snapshot of views from a range of important stakeholders in the early stages of the Initiative.

2. Actions in initial phase

In this phase we have:

1. Read EEI project documentation on the related Blackboard site and put the plan for Phase 1 of the evaluation in the 'Evaluation' sub-folder.
2. Read other relevant documentation (e.g. information on the HEFCE website about the strategic importance of employer engagement and sense of where it lies in terms of government priorities for the sector) in order to build up contextual knowledge.
3. Interviewed the main people involved in the Initiative, analysed the interviews and reported to the EEI team and Steering Group. There are various components to this Initiative and it has been necessary to speak to a wide range of those involved. We have carried out 15 interviews as follows:
 - EEI team members;
 - Steering Group members;
 - those concerned with professional services in the University;
 - academics involved with pilot Masters programmes;
 - those concerned with the Springboards.

The interview schedule is available in Appendix A of this report and is also on the Blackboard site of the Employer Engagement Initiative.

4. Developed a plan for the post-scoping phase of the evaluation with the agreement and input of the EEI team.

3. Ongoing reporting activities in Phase 1

In January 2009, there was a meeting between the evaluation team and Mary Morrison, the EEI director to give interim feedback on the findings arising out of the interviews as well as to provide information on the progress of the evaluation. In response to that feedback, Mary produced a draft communication plan. (See Appendix B for a copy of the communication plan.)

In February 2009, there was a Steering Group meeting where the evaluation team reported on findings.

In March 2009, there was a meeting between Mary Morrison and Debra Humphris (chair of the Steering Group) and the evaluation team to enable us to provide more detailed feedback and to discuss the progress of the evaluation.

4. The emerging picture

Clearly much hard work has gone into taking the EEI forward; there have been many achievements:

- an extensive audit of existing employer engagement activity throughout the University (see summary of audit findings in Appendix C);
- progress on various aspects of the project including: extensive discussion of administrative changes required within the University in order to facilitate the development of a flexible approach to study; work towards institutional level approval of these changes; work on developing pilot Masters programmes; work on appointing Business Fellows (as detailed in Appendix D);
- the Steering Group has been developed and extended. See updated membership of the Steering Group in Appendix E;
- work in relation to the South Coast Design Forum, which is being funded within the Initiative, has also been intensive in the early stages. The SCDF could provide another valuable network for broad engagement with employers and the local community, and provide specific opportunities relevant to the EEI, employer engagement generally and opportunities for our students.

The focus in this report is on areas for development, but we would wish to acknowledge the above achievements which are especially commendable in view of: (1) the rapidly changing external economic environment; (2) the staffing challenges faced by the Initiative including the long illness and sad death of Caroline Thomas, formerly Deputy Vice-Chancellor, whose senior management leadership and support had been invaluable to the creation of the Initiative; the maternity leave of Sarah Rogers, the co-author of the bid; the move of the bid developer Pat Maier to another post in the University. Active and energetic senior management leadership and support is now available from Pro Vice-Chancellor Debra Humphris and from the EEI director, Mary Morrison; (3) the general system and cultural challenges which have faced the Initiative; and (4) the loss of the Faraday Building as a base for the Design Centre proposed in the original bid.

This report will focus now on the data emerging from our initial evaluation interviews.

5. Issues explored in interviews

The broad issues for discussion in the interviews were as follows:

- Role of the interviewee in the University;

- Role of the interviewee in the Initiative;
- Interviewee understandings of the Initiative (including relationship to working processes, working structures, engagement with employers);
- Potential impacts on the interviewee's area of work;
- Place of the Initiative in the bigger picture of priorities and demands within the institution/in the interviewee's area;
- Factors facilitating the Initiative in the interviewee's area? (e.g. culture, structures);
- Obstacles to achieving the aims of the Initiative in the interviewee's area (e.g. culture, structures);
- Key events/changes, if any, that need to happen in order for the EEI to have effects in the interviewee's area (processes, structures, culture);
- Communication between different strands of the Initiative;
- Specific additional contributions being made by the EEI;
- Initial effects of the Initiative.

In reporting on findings, it is necessary to maintain confidentiality as far as possible. Those interviewed have been alerted to the fact that it will be difficult to maintain full confidentiality.

6. The picture from the interviews

In this section, we will segment the interview responses according to staffing category and report in some detail on comments made. After that, we will summarise emerging themes and explore the implications of these findings and themes.

6.1 The Employer Engagement Initiative team

The team (Pat Maier and Mary Morrison) reported on an extensive list of activities in which they had been involved as part of the Initiative and as reported above. The team also spoke about difficulties they confronted, including the staffing changes mentioned in Section 4.

Furthermore, the team reported on the unexpected difficulties created by the rapidly changing external economic situation; the changing nature of employers' ability to fund, and interest in providing, educational opportunities for their employees.

The team referred to the challenges they faced in understanding the University's complex administrative processes relating to student fees and registration. They then had to devise ways of addressing aspects of the system which will need to change if provision is to be made more 'employer-friendly' and flexible. They reported on the cultural difficulties of working on employer engagement activities within a Russell Group university, although it should be remembered that parts of the University such as engineering and health sciences have a long history of working with employers. Interviewees also spoke about the difficulties caused by aspects of the University's financial system, which encouraged Schools to work in competition, rather than co-

operation. This made the provision of an Open Masters programmes, where different elements would be provided by different Schools, a demanding goal.

The internal financial difficulties caused by a local staffing freeze caused problems for the Initiative at a basic level in that one of the pilot Masters programmes was delayed because there was inadequate administrative support. The EEI team reported on the need to work on a variety of fronts as envisaged by the Initiative – professional services, academic Schools and programmes, the sector Springboards.

Clearly launching the Initiative has been hugely challenging, but the team has worked hard at the initial implementation tasks. The clarification of senior management and leadership provided new energy and direction by early 2009.

6.2 Steering group members

We have interviewed the original members of the Steering Group (who were 'in post' before the official start of the EEI and who were all senior University staff), The new members of the Steering Group (added in 2009) have not yet been interviewed.

Each member of the Steering Group had an overall strategic view of the broad direction of the University, and of the need to develop coherence between 'corporate goals' and those of the EEI, if the Initiative were to be successful. They also had a good understanding of the potential impacts of the external economic crisis and of how the Initiative could potentially contribute to the longer-term development of the University (potential growth in numbers of part-time students, flexible learning opportunities, the employability agenda). The following quotations are illustrative:

Decisions need to be within the context of the wider University strategy and while this project has been getting underway, the economy has been going slightly belly-up. We are in a very different environment. It is now crucially important that we connect with employers in sectors where we are focusing the project.

It connects with so many pieces in the University – employer engagement, educational delivery and so all the related Schools. QA arrangements. Lifelong learning. All complex and the environment just went umph.

It is not clear how the present economic climate will play out. At some levels, people will want more education and will stay longer in education and when storm is over they can go out and get a job. Whether industry has the money to fund people. we'll have to see. The economic changes have put a very different perspective on how this bid will play out.

Connections were made between progress in relation to employer engagement and the continuing financial well-being of the institution.

There is nothing in the project that we don't need to do anyway. For example, billing for a module. The world is not just undergraduates wanting to do full programmes. At moment, we may not be making best use of our potential offer. The number of part-time students has actually declined over the last ten years.

Interviewees were also aware of the policy agenda outside the University in terms of: greater focus on employability; the probable growth of higher education take-up among mature, part-time students following the recommendations of the Leitch Report (2006); and the changing demographic profile of the likely student population over the coming years.

Interviewees could also see that there were potential additional benefits from employer engagement in postgraduate flexible education.

It would probably have add-on benefits – employment of our graduates and future research contracts.

Several interviewees also displayed an awareness of the untested nature of employer demand for flexible learning opportunities for their employees.

Will outside companies be willing to pay? Will there be a guaranteed market? A lot of work needs to go into things before they get off the ground.

The Steering Group had an understanding of the difficulties of professional services in adapting, especially at speed, to the aspiration to create more flexible 'employer-friendly' provision. Systems difficulties, therefore, could 'drive activities' rather than the other way round. Existing systems have posed problems for setting up cross-School, flexible programmes of study. University software systems are set up for students to study on a complete programme within one School. Apart from software issues, Schools might not want to co-operate with each other in setting up Masters programmes because of the internal financially competitive environment within which they work in the University. In addition, the lack of a University system of communication, for all University matters, was an obstacle to communicating about the EEI. As one Steering Group member put it, the Initiative has had to 'break down walls' in the University and people will have to 'operate outside their comfort zones' for its activities to succeed.

The Steering Group also recognised the cultural difficulties in many sections of the University, both academic and administrative, in dealing with employer engagement. Flexible learning and employer engagement was not seen to be 'as prestigious as some other aspects of what we do', that is 'research or bright undergraduates or postgraduates who are here full-time'.

If we can find ways to get employer engagement to work, to get academics to participate – if we can get credit-bearing to work out. There would be opportunities for more Schools to offer more things like that and it might be a useful income stream. An open question whether we can.

One or two members of the Steering Group talked about the difficulties caused by the lack of clear leadership of the Initiative in the first few months. One mentioned that the bid did not state clearly how the Initiative was to be operationalised. Early implementation of the Initiative had also been affected by University structures which separated research from teaching and from enterprise, and made clear management at a senior strategic level of all aspects of the Initiative very challenging. 'There was not clarity about who was leading the employability agenda in the University'.

Steering Group members had widely varying levels of knowledge about the EEI. Some were clearly strongly engaged with it and had a detailed knowledge of aspects of the Initiative and how these were developing. Others had a far more tenuous connection with the Initiative. Some were unclear about their role, within the Initiative. Some had had a more central role at certain stages in the past, and others expected to have a stronger role in the future. There did not appear to be clear channels for informing the Steering Group of overall developments, apart from through Steering Group meetings, which at the time of the interviews (late 2008 and early 2009) had been infrequent.

6.3 Professional services

Interviewees involved in the professional services aspects of changes to processes and systems could, in general, see advantages to the proposed alterations.

I can see the point. Flexible pathways for postgraduate study is sound.

Existing 'workarounds' to allow flexible learning are perceived to be labour-intensive and time-consuming. Systems and process reforms would enable programmes and modules being offered in a non-conventional way (i.e. not as part of a standard postgraduate qualification usually taken full-time) to be dealt with more consistently, effectively and efficiently. Were the system to be reformed to accommodate flexible learning:

It would completely change our lives.

However, the scale of the proposed modifications to student registration, fees computer systems is considerable. The changes would require approval at a high strategic level within the University and then allocation of resources for staff time for implementation and staff training. Implementation of the changes would require prioritisation among existing planned systems and process modifications, some of which are required by external bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the student loans company. In terms of its perceived strategic prioritisation, the EEI came:

in the category of pretty important things yet to be scheduled. We are 110% committed till at least October [2009] without this.

In all cases, if the changes required by the Initiative came into being, they would require a large input of effort from professional services to implement and also to instigate new ways of working.

The impact of the proposed changes touches on every stage in the student lifecycle.

Professional services staff were unused to an initiative such the EEI, which had come about through a bid for external funds without extensive internal consultation.

The Employer Engagement Initiative has come out of left field. Usually we have mandatory changes from HEFCE/HESA or UCAS and get two years notice of the changes.

Interviewees were unclear about the Initiative's scope or overall rationale and seemed to know little about it beyond individual meetings about their own particular involvement.

There has been too little dissemination of what was trying to be achieved. I'm not clear about full extent of what University is trying to achieve. I don't know the whole picture. ... I'm not clear when the project aims to deliver.

They knew that proposals for the required administrative changes were going to the relevant committees and boards in the University, but were unclear how those proposals were progressing. It was not clear to them how the change was being managed.

Professional services staff were concerned about broader management aspects of the Initiative. Were there to be two systems running in the University, one for students studying in a regular way and one for those studying on a modular, flexible basis?

The Open University is geared for modules. You start with Level 1 and 2 and 3s. The system is written in a way which enables that to happen and for student to take lots of time out and half credits etc. It requires quite complex programming and there is no conflict with a different system. At Southampton, there would potentially be a conflict between the existing system and a more flexible system.

With regard to Schools, one speculated on the challenge for managers:

There would be two different groups of students. How do the Schools monitor progress? Manage tutoring? Assessment? There would be extra management work as well as system and process changes. Business processes would have to develop as well.

Interviewees had questions about the Initiative and felt the need for more information. One expressed a wide range of concerns, many of which had been raised by others:

The Initiative needs a clear project management team with a shared understanding of objectives and timelines and priorities, and close iterative management of the resource ... We need to know the relationship with systems changes. What are the governance arrangements around this? The Steering Group – who is it? When are they meeting? What have they done? What is trade off between time, quality and cost? What are the ways that different roles [processes, systems] are interrelated? I don't know how this is supposed to work. It would help if these things were put in place. Perhaps they are in place, but I don't know. (emphasis ours)

6.4 Academics related to the pilot Masters projects

The academics interviewed were strongly involved with the plans for introducing their proposed Masters programmes. They were very committed, for somewhat different reasons, to employer engagement. One said that employer engagement is:

Very important for us. It is central to everything we do. We believe that what distinguishes us from our competitors is the very applied nature of what we do.

Another had a strong, longstanding personal commitment to working with mature, part-time students:

I passionately believe that working with part-time students is good for them and for the Uni.

The pilot Masters programmes supported by the EEI had different trajectories. One programme had only had financial support approved recently from the Initiative and had been stalled because of staffing problems. Another programme was in difficulties because of funding problems arising from the recession. One programme would have happened anyway and was not getting particular support from the EEI. Another new e-learning initiative for a Masters programme was coming on board as this phase of the evaluation was ending.

The interviewees spoke about the difficulties of setting up programmes because of the amount of work this involved. They, themselves, had high workloads. Getting co-operation from academic colleagues with similarly high workloads was a problem. Lack of administrative support had been a severe cause of additional work in one case.

One made the point that the Initiative might not bear fruit immediately, but would do so in a few years, and it would be a mistake to judge it too early:

'Evaluating it [the Initiative] after a year or two – you have to be careful about that. If you are looking for big hit outputs, which is often what senior managers looks for – you ain't going to get any and often things you have set in motion will bear fruit 5 or 6 years later ... That is the time to be evaluating the success of it, not now.'

The academics interviewed seemed rather confused and unclear about the overall nature of the EEI. They were working hard to develop their own innovative programmes, without having a broader conception of the aims of the Initiative and how their provision contributed to these. They were committed broadly to employer engagement either because of a strong disciplinary and School commitment to employer engagement or a strong personal commitment to part-time, mature students. They were aware of the challenges of communication. One said that he was:

'not as up to date as I might so that perhaps suggests the communication is not working as well as it might... but the answer is not a website or a Blackboard discussion group or more emails. I can tell you that. No please. Not another one.'

The academics were aware that employer engagement was challenging the traditional teaching and funding culture in some areas of the University. One reported that, when he had approached someone in a different School about participating in a Masters programme, the person he spoke to said that he had not realised that the School the academic belonged to was in financial trouble. The assumption was that no one would try to set up inter-School co-operation unless they were in desperate straits! One pointed out that flexible

models of learning were spoken about in derogatory terms such as 'pick 'n mix' and 'dip in and out'.

The academics were also aware of the internal systems problems involved in introducing courses that fell outside typical programme and curricular designs.

6.5 Those concerned with Springboards

The people interviewed in this category had longstanding experience in business, in contrast with the academic members of the Springboard. (It had been suggested in meetings with Mary Morrison and Pat Maier that the academics involved in the Springboards should be interviewed at a later date.)

Interviewees talked about a cultural divide between industry (which wants focused activities where the benefits are immediately apparent) and higher education (which has a broader and longer-term focus). They felt that the two sectors would find it hard to communicate as they come from such different backgrounds with different priorities. Interviewees identified the practical challenges of dealing with business, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with diverse needs.

'If we look at employer engagement, the world breaks into two communities – the corporates, public and private – they are big complex organisations and we have a big complex organisation with a big complex management structure. We [the University] are comfortable dealing with those kind of organisations. Everyone knows how to do this stuff. Typically, those organisations will have people who understand a bit about universities. The big challenge is how you deal with the SMEs. They are run by pretty bright, busy people. They want to get stuff for free from universities as they have paid their taxes. They don't want to talk about strategy as they are too busy and interested in immediate matters.'

One interviewee talked about the cultural difficulties for universities to reach out directly to employers and the need to have a clear offer for the business community:

'The University is not particularly good at operationalising things. It's not in the DNA. We have a fairly disparaging view of sales. Can you imagine the thought and cleverness that goes into selling train tracks in Taiwan. It is far from being a double glazing sales issue. You are responding to a perceived clients' needs. I keep coming back to what are you going to give these people. I haven't come up with an answer.'

They also mentioned that once an employer engagement activity had been set up, it could not necessarily be assumed that it would run without careful management and attention to how it would fit with the mission of the University.

The people interviewed suggested that the EEI had an unclear focus and offer. Their knowledge about the Initiative was based on one or two meetings, rather than full information about the project. They did not know about the Blackboard site for the project or have access to it. Interviewees were unclear what their role in the Initiative was, or what it could or should be. One said that the interface between his role and the Initiative was 'uncertain' and 'ambiguous'. The uncertainty and apparent lack of prioritisation made it 'hard for people to put their shoulder behind the Initiative.' They did, however, seem

to have quite creative ideas about how things could move forward, suggestions which could perhaps be drawn on in some kind of working group comprising the different parties involved in a particular project.

7. Summary of emerging themes

Many actions have been taken and complex processes of change set in motion during the challenging period that has characterised the early stages of the Initiative's implementation. Initiatives such as this operate in a multi-faceted institutional and economic context and swift, straightforward change cannot be expected. Many of the comments made in the interviews echo findings in the academic and policy literatures about employer engagement. For example, Bolden and Petrov (2008) and Connor and Hirsh (2008) write about the complex and contested nature of the territory of employer engagement and the systemic and cultural challenges involved in developing relationships between higher education and employers over time. The cultural divide between employers and higher education is emphasised in this literature.

Issues arising from the initial phase of the evaluation include:

Awareness and shared understandings of the Employer Engagement Initiative

There is a lack of awareness and shared understanding of the Employer Engagement Initiative among various interviewees. Some people are unclear about:

- what is expected of them exactly?
- what is the overall picture of/plan for the Initiative – what are the different elements and how do they fit together?
- what is the exact status and authority of the EEI?

Some are used to change happening in a very different way in the University, They are used to strategic forward planning about large-scale changes and consultation ahead of time.

Communication and management

Those involved are not always sure how the Initiative is progressing. This applies to the Initiative in general, but also to the specific part with which the person interviewed is concerned. It is not always clear what follow up is required or expected after meetings or in terms of actions. Two main queries emerged in relation to their roles and responsibilities:

- are they involved in order to offer advice and in a consultative role?
- should they be carrying out actions and, if so, how should these happen?

Interviewees seemed to be unaware of the Blackboard site for the project and, in many cases, were dependent on often infrequent meetings, either of the Steering Group, or with the Employer Engagement Initiative team members, for their knowledge about its nature and progress.

Broadening of the Employer Engagement Initiative

From being a complex, but limited initiative with specific objectives, the Employer Engagement Initiative is broadening out and merging with the developing Employer Engagement strategy for the University. This may strengthen it in that many of the flexible education aims of the Initiative require institutional level system and process changes and so may benefit from strategic commitment from the top of the University. On the other hand, a broadened agenda and focus of action may blur specific objectives and shift goalposts.

8. Implications

We are at the end of the scoping phase of the evaluation. It is an opportune moment to take stock of the Initiative's progress, to take account of the early evaluation findings and to revisit the plan and goals in light of current progress.

It is important to highlight that the interviews discussed in this report are historical events. They represent a snapshot of views at a particular point in the implementation of the initiative but it should be recognised that they are located within a dynamic project which continues to evolve. It is also essential to note that there was considerable support for the aspirations of the EEI and some enthusiasm for the idea that the University should foreground employer engagement. Interviewees were presenting constructive views about how the EEI might increase its effectiveness. Nonetheless, the evaluation has identified the scale of the practical and cultural challenges associated with realising the Initiative's goals. Full implementation of the Initiative will have far-reaching consequences for many academics and administrators.

With regard to the evaluation itself, the strategy of talking to a wide range of stakeholders has been helpful. The interviews have enabled the various people involved to identify the diverse implications of the Initiative for academics, administration and industry partners as well as to discuss their early experiences of the EEI.

The evaluation is highlighting issues of commitment, ownership and communication in the EEI and has located these in the context and history (staff changes, external economic situation) of the implementation. It is important to ask how commitment to the Employer Engagement Initiative can be developed, and how those involved can be encouraged to take ownership of the relevant parts of the project. A communication plan has been devised in response to our interim evaluation findings – providing a good example of how a formative evaluation can feed into practice. Additionally, we would suggest that for those involved in the Initiative there needs to be ongoing support and involvement in relation to specific aspects of activity. One suggestion is for task groups of individuals (not just Steering Group members) to work together to achieve specific EEI goals. Another suggestion is to use the EEI to provide opportunities for academics who are strongly committed to employer engagement and who have experience of working with employers to come together. This would be an opportunity in turbulent and difficult times to share expertise about what works and how.

List of references

Bolden, Richard and Georgy Petrov. *Employer Engagement with Higher Education: A Literature Review*. Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter, November 2008.

Connor, Helen and Wendy Hirsh. *Influence through Collaboration: Employer Demand for Higher Learning and Engagement with Higher Education*. Council for Industry and Higher Education, 2008.

Leitch Review of Skills: Prosperity for All in the Global Economy – world class skills, HM Treasury. December 2006.

Appendix A Evaluation Phase 1: Interview questions/areas for discussion

Role of the person being interviewed

What is your role in the university?

What is your role in the Initiative?

Understandings of the Initiative

What are your understandings of the Initiative and its goals?

(including relationship to working processes, working structures, engagement with employers)

Potential impacts on your area of work

What are the potential impacts on your area of work? (e.g. personal workload, working processes, working structures, engagements with employers)

Place of the Initiative in the bigger picture

Where does the Employer Engagement Initiative sit in the bigger picture of priorities and demands within the institution/in your area?

Factors facilitating the Initiative

What are the factors facilitating the Initiative in your area? (e.g. culture, structures)

Obstacles to achieving the aims of the Initiative

What are the factors likely to be obstacles to achieving the aims of the Initiative in your area? (e.g. culture, structures)

Key events

Are there key events/changes that have to happen in order for the EEI to have effects in your area? What are these? (processes, structures, culture)

Communication between different strands of the Initiative

How does communication work between XX and the other strands of the project?

How are the different strands linking together?

Contributions of the Employer Engagement Initiative

What is the Employer Engagement Initiative adding to what already exists?

Initial effects of the Initiative

Have there been any initial effects of the Initiative?

Appendix B EEI communications strategy

Communications Strategy

This communications strategy aims to inform those involved in the EEI and the wide university audience, and relevant external partners.

This is intended to:

- Raise the profile of the EEI within the University
- Facilitate understanding of the EEI and its sub projects
- Maintain contact with EEI stakeholders and those actively involved
- Enable wide involvement in the EEI
- Maximise benefit to the UoS community
- Ensure sharing of expertise

EEI Contacts/ Audiences (Table one)

We have a small immediate audience – the steering group.

The wider audience of those actively involved in other parts of the project, or thinking about it.

A wider audience still of individuals who may wish to become involved, or be interested in being kept up to date – the broad employer engagement community of RIS, DHoS enterprise and education, Careers, employability links of various kinds (see attachment to Business Fellows paper).

Group (s)	Name	email
<i>Steering group members and attendees, and business fellows when in post</i>		
<i>Inner circle–active involvement or considering it</i>	Eg those involved in energy certificate, environmental health certificate, WBL in nursing/ engineering,	
<i>Outer Circle: ie those who are not currently involved but may be in future or may wish to stay informed – or should be informed due to their role in the institution</i>	Eg all employer engagement linked roles, Deputy Heads of School (Education),	
<i>External – ie consumers of professional development</i>		

Aims	Communication with	Methods of Communication	Responsibility and Frequency	Recognisable Outcomes / Progress	Challenges
To fulfil essential reporting requirements and expected engagement with HE community	HEFCE HEA/ HEFCE/ other universities funded	Standard reporting as requested Attendance at HEA exchange group meetings Provision of information for HEFCE website	As requested – tbc Quarterly As requested/ appropriate	Ensuring accountability Sharing experience and ideas with community of universities funded by this stream Appropriate information displayed	
To give steer on strategy of project and offer regular guidance	Steering group	Steering group meetings based on papers for steering group, Ad hoc requests – if necessary in between meetings – to chair or entire group	Once per quarter As necessary	Planning and strategic development, appropriate re direction As above	
To make key documentation and reference material available	Steering group and inner circle	Blackboard (BB)	Ongoing	Blackboard site used by staff (can track hits)	Information overload, BB not available to externals
To enable and encourage discussion, engagement and critique	Steering group, inner circle and outer circle	Blog on wordpress	Ongoing	Blog used New collaborations emerge	No engagement, blog not used
To consult on issues connected to broad employer engagement agenda (ie inc RIS/ Careers)	Particularly Student Services (JR) and RIS (Don Spalinger).	Meetings/ updates	As appropriate	To integrate employer engagement work in fields of careers, provision of profession development	

				and research.	
To have updates on work package progress and involve other university staff as appropriate	EEI team and inner circle as relevant	Meetings/ electronic updates	As appropriate	To ensure that learning is transferred and to monitor progress	
To keep broader community of interest informed	Outer circle	<p>Via Team and task / project group meetings</p> <p>BB – as above</p> <p>E Newsletter linked to LATEU and other websites as appropriate?</p>	<p>As necessary for particular task/project</p> <p>Bi- Monthly</p>	<p>All informed of progress</p> <p>Progression of sub projects</p> <p>Expertise shared between the projects</p> <p>Collaborations enabled</p>	Information overload
To inform University of top line developments	The University	<p>Via online University bulletin</p> <p>Via Sussed for specific events</p> <p>Via LATEU website (page on EEI)</p>	Could link to event such as Wayne Hemingway’s proposed visit, or FESM showcase in May	High level of recognition of EEI and aims	
<p>To demonstrate to companies/ employers as consumers the potential developmental outcomes for them and their employees from collaboration with UoS</p> <p>To promote those sessions/ programmes as</p>	External audience – other universities, potential partners, sectors	<p>Via Business pages</p> <p>Via LATEU website?</p> <p>Via partners such as Marine SouthEast, sector skills networks etc</p> <p>Via targeted communications</p>	Business pages should be regularly updated with appropriate information – this could happen soon	<p>High level of awareness of UoS ‘offer’ within relevant businesses</p> <p>Increased enquiries from business re professional development</p> <p>Increased enrolments</p>	

appropriate					
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Appendix C Employer Engagement Audit 2008/9–summary

Document produced by Employer Engagement Team (February 2009)

Between September and December 2008, each School was visited and an interview carried out on employer engagement, short courses and flexible delivery at Masters level. This was often with the Deputy Head of School (Education), occasionally another staff member with a particular role with employers. The full record of interviews is available on the blackboard site, but below is a summary giving an indication of the scope of responses and a table at the end is a working list of short courses and flexible delivery at M level at the moment. Additionally, there is a list of employer engagement roles which is partly based on information from this audit.

Professional short courses

Short courses. Most Schools offer short some courses, or the option of taking a module from an existing programme as CPD (SOES, Medicine). Some have a wide menu (Health Sciences) others have courses offered on demand (Maths) and some have none (WSA, ECS, Biological Sciences). For a list see table at end of this document.

These courses are a mixture of **credit and non credit bearing** – e.g. Law, Geography and Maths run non-credit bearing courses. Health Sciences, ISVR offer short courses which are credit-bearing.

Where delivery is **flexible** it is often intensive courses (which may be weekend, or blocks of a week or more) as in the case of Management, ISVR, Law. Work-based learning is used in some cases – for instance in Nursing and Midwifery, HCIU. On-line delivery is less common – and usually limited to some elements of a module or course, rather than the whole.

Perceptions of the value of short courses. This varies – where there is clear external demand (Health Sciences) it is taken as part of the standard employer expectation. In the case of maritime law, the annual short course is prestigious and profitable. In other Schools, short courses may not be big earners but are perceived as having other potential advantages – generally increasing employer contacts and increasing potential for other collaborations. In other cases the view is that it is high input for low outcome or feared to be so. Concern also that achieving flexibility (turning modules into online materials for instance) requires large time input.

Generally there is a **central listing** on School sites. Often marketing has not been actively pursued, but there was general interest in having a central listing on the business pages, although some were concerned about raising unrealistic expectations (ie creating demand that could not be met).

Flexibly delivered M level modules

There is some flexible delivery at this level in most Schools – largely intensive/block teaching, and some work-based learning (mostly in Health Sciences). Some Schools, due to demand as indicated so far have no flexible delivery – e.g. ECS. For list see table at end.

Open Masters

There was broad, if qualified support for the proposal, with some interest in contribution – again qualified. Some were able to identify programme that would be suitable (although the programme leaders would need to be consulted). Others who had some flexible delivery already were not sure that those courses had an appeal beyond a very specific audience (eg Official Stats run from SocSci). Some indicated an interest in increasing flexible delivery but were aware of the costs and time that would need to be invested. The concept of the student driver was also raised as a problem – since the driver is crude, being full time or half time, so students who might be only studying a module incur a half time driver of c. £800, which may completely cancel out income.

Some Schools, due to the career structure in their professional area could see no apparent value in the open Masters for their own markets – for instance Law and Medicine. Others thought the principle very attractive; flexibility, interdisciplinarity, employee/er led, but there were concerns; where would this sit, who would give strategic lead, it is potentially costly (for all concerned), would be huge time investment to make modules flexible/ e learning, potential lack of coherence, value of award (how to ensure M level study when so broad?), how to guarantee admission prerequisites met when students come in on different pathway to the norm.

Employer engagement with the School

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5. Others as relevant.

None of these are likely to be studying before Semester Two 2009/10.

Appendix One: Summary list of short courses and flexible delivery at M level (indicative as at Jan 2009).

	Short Courses	Flexible delivery at M level
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Chemistry	Regularly offer electrochemistry summer workshop Have ad hoc requests via consultancy or personal links Have also invited companies to send staff on existing lecture courses	PGT offer is very small. No flexible delivery at M level. Not opposed to developing flexible delivery modes but concerned about the workload and prioritisation. (Major pressure remains to recruit UG). Could possibly consider this with dedicated funds.
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ECS	None	Masters programmes may all be of relevance to industry. However, little flexible delivery – just some modules are block taught. (eg MSc Microelectronics System Design, MSc Radio Frequency Communications Systems). Modules within these are offered as Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which could then be used towards a full Masters, or exit award.
SES	Various – some examples: Astronautics group offer course to European Space Agency employees with variants to other companies and at various levels (technical and admin staff). Course for BAE systems staff Nuclear Energy module (also an M level offering) in conjunction with the Navy.	Nuclear Energy module (10 credits) is M level and delivered in a 2 week block. Ship science – M Tech has some block teaching on the M Tech, would in principle be an option for the open Masters.
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Maths	Operational Research . Short courses organised on at occasional requests from companies, which are typically special-purpose and	Run currently 3 MSc programmes: Operational Research, Operational Research and Finance, Statistics with Applications in Medicine .

	<p>designed specifically to meet the company's needs. New (under development) MSc in Actuarial Science may offer opportunities currently under development, but this depends on what the professional body will be doing. National networks in Statistics and Operational Research organize PGR short courses for the personal research development. Southampton is involved in delivering some of these.</p>	<p>Coming on stream: MSc Actuarial Science. We also have an integrated Masters MMath programme, which is focused on pure and applied mathematics. Several modules on the MSc programmes are run in a compact (short fat) format which enables flexible study. Some lecturers are from outside the School. The MSc Actuarial Science could be a potential CPD market.</p>
SOES	<p>Already offer UNCLOS (Law of the Sea) as short course, and satellite oceanography, possibly could widen this to other technology – linked courses and climate dynamics and climate linked ones</p>	<p>Flexible delivery is quite common at M level (block teaching).</p>
Physics	None	No PGT programmes
ISVR	<p>There are short courses which are part of the MSc programme and some are stand alone. Examples: Vibration Control (MSc module), Insight into Vibration (stand alone) and the Advanced Course in Noise and Vibration (stand alone). Also short courses in both formats on biomedical signal processing and Audiology.</p>	<p>The short courses are delivered as compact courses – generally the Masters courses are traditional delivery with the exception of some modules that can be taken as one week courses.</p>

Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences		
WSA	None	Design Management modules tend to be delivered as compact courses at 40 credits.
Education	None	PCET programmes are already offered to the military and there are new opportunities. These are flexibly delivered and part of a PG award with exit levels at: certificate, diploma and Masters. These are often delivered on site or as residential programmes. Currently have 50 stds PGCE / 20 stds PGDip /M level. All/most PCET courses are part time, delivered in the evening mainly, so accommodating local/regional students.
Humanities	Part time language courses are run for external and internal students selected on a modular basis for a range of abilities – see http://www.southampton.ac.uk/cls/parttime/index.html	The new Postgraduate Certificate in English Language Teaching (Online) http://www.soton.ac.uk/ml/postgrad/pg_certificate_elt.html is a distance learning certificate, completion expected over 2 years, delivered by the British Council in Mexico. Archaeology – Masters' degrees have vocational content e.g. maritime archaeology, osteoarchaeology, archaeological computing. Film and cultural management may be suitable for those in the industry. Throughout the School MA/MSc programmes are scheduled with block teaching on single days (as far as possible), in order to suit students in employment.
Law	Used to have many – but were often not financially or otherwise beneficial, since they diverted much time from research or mainstream teaching. Still have a small number of them but the most is within the Institute for Maritime Law (IML) which has a very well known and respected short course each year – with an affluent circle of interest.	No flexible learning – all delivered as 'normal' student programmes. Might be interested in developing some e learning modules – if time possible.
Management	The School offers evening seminar series which were intended as a hook for further training. There is also a range of short intensive courses such as Building Agile Organisations, Data Driven Marketing etc.	MBA offers block teaching for students – at least consolidated to one half day per week – also on some MSc programmes.

	Were plans to launch a programme of short courses on marketing which would be credit bearing – but this on hold. All M modules are in theory open as CPD modules with or without assessment.	
Social Sciences	No short courses per se – but some PGT programmes, such as the MSc professional studies are intended for professional development. There is also the option to take MSc Official Statistics modules without credit as training.	Both programmes are offered flexibly- the MSc official statistics and MSc professional studies (certificate, diploma and full Masters all offered in both) modular structure with block teaching
Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences		
Biological Sciences	None	No M programmes
Health Sciences	Large menu of health profession courses across the School.	Short courses listed are all (or mostly) related to M level award programmes, e.g. MSc Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care – with some WBL and intensive delivery.
Medicine	None	MSc Allergy – is part time distance learning with certificate and diploma exit awards MSc Public Health Nutrition is block teaching - with certificate and diploma exit awards
Psychology	Only very specific – case proven courses. Recently had a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy course on NHS funding at M level.	The MSc in Animal Behaviour is delivered in a compact format (one week/module).

Appendix two: List of Employer Engagement related roles

Institutional

- 1. Careers officers/ staff**
- 2. DVC research/ Research and Innovation Services staff.**
- 3. Employer Engagement Initiative team**

Faculty

- 4. Associate Deans Enterprise.**
- 5. Employability Coordinators** – three at Faculty level but also others e.g. Paul Hughes – School of Geography employability coordinator, and Liz Williams (Lecturer in law with responsibility for employability skills in School of Law).

School

- 6. DHoS Enterprise** – one in each School appointed by late 2008.
- 7. London Technology Network fellows**, role is as industrial liaison with a focus on KT, six in UoS:

Ashley Pringle - Medicine
Paul Townsend - Medicine
Jodie Babister - Medicine
Mohamed Torbati - Engineering Sciences
Joern Werner - Biological Sciences
Nick Harris - Electronics & Computer Science
Mike Byfield - CEE

- 8. Industrial liaison tutors** (or similar). Normally academics – the main purpose of appointment was to find placements for students. More common in engineering group, such as

Stephen Turnock (Ship/ SES)
Kenji Takeda (Aero/ SES)
Jonathan Swingler (Mech/SES)
Dr Anurag Agarwal (ISVR),

but also including

Jeremy Hinks in Chemistry
Liz Williams (Lecturer in law with responsibility for employability skills)

- 9. Industrial liaison officers:** these are similar to 2. above. Two were appointed within the KTA for operational research - Gillian Groom and Ian Rowleigh in Maths/Management. Their role is to liaise with employers and id project opportunities for the Masters students on OR programmes. Each placement costs the employer £3,000.
- 10. Impact generation officer:** current KTA bid for CEE has 2, decision due early March
- 11. Staff with Business Development role:**
John Darlington in ECS

Clint Stiles in SES

12. **Development officers** (eg Joanne Donahue in SOES and one other similar post?)
13. **Marketing officers?** Such as Joyce Lewis, Marketing and Communications Manager ECS, who is main contact for employers on a range of issues.

Appendix D Achievements and progress as detailed for the February 2009 Steering Group meeting
(Document prepared by Employer Engagement Initiative Team)

EEI headline updates February 2009

0 Project Management

- Completed audit of activity with each School, and employer engagement contact (see additional audit report)
- Proposal for assistant post to steering group
- Project page on LATEU website

1 Academic processes that enable flexible delivery for a credit-based system at M level.

- Presented outline business case for changes to administrative systems to facilitate students on non-traditional pathways (ie flexible, modular study)
- This now to be taken to next phase with full business case to be developed to scope and enable changes

2 Establish a Business - Education Gateway

- Working in collaboration with RIS to restructure business pages and present information there about professional development/ /short courses etc as appropriate
- Holding text drafted for business pages

3 Three sector Springboards

- Three sectors now identified – maritime, energy and ageing/health technologies
- Working with university research groups
- Contact made within energy and maritime with skills council/ /alliance representatives

4 An Employer Engagement Framework

- A School framework already exists in CEE – has been circulated to other Schools on request
- A FESM framework was produced by Sarah Rogers and a Careers Service framework by Ann Collins – circulated to Schools on request

5 Eight Southampton Business Fellows (SB fellows) in place within Schools

- Proposal to steering group re recruitment strategy and job description

6 Southampton Business Fellow network

- Proposal to steering group re training strategy and coordination

7 Three pilot Masters

- Work-based learning – Nursing have begun marketing the WBL pathway as taster for M level study with two local trusts and will pursue others
- Work-based learning – Nursing to share expertise with engineering where there is professional body interest in M level WBL
- E learning – proposal led by CEE for environmental health Masters including public health (Health Sciences)
- E learning – in discussion with SES re existing energy certificate to be redesigned

8 Enrol 60 new FTE students onto flexible Masters level modules

- Have discussed further the potential for use of ASNs within the pilots mentioned above, but additionally:
- The School of Education currently delivers PCGE to various professional groups, could consider new pathways for this and possibly use ASN funding.
- Health Sciences are developing WBL modules for local employers, one or some of which may qualify for this ASN funding (not M level but is potentially good use of ASNs).

9 Development of business models for co-funding

- Discussion document to steering group

10 Design Centre/design community and SCDF

- Unable to find a location for the centre (originally planned for Faraday Tower) has prevented us from using the loan offered
- We are maintaining links with South Coast Design Forum and the foundation of a Southampton branch will continue.

11 Evaluation

- Brenda Johnston has continued with interviews and made proposals re internal communication and having additional project meetings (eg project implementation meetings where work packages could be discussed in more detail and appropriate allocation of tasks discussed).

**Appendix E Steering Group Updated Membership
(document prepared by Employer Engagement Initiative
Team – February 2009)**

**Employer Engagement Steering Group, Terms of Reference and
Membership**

Terms of Reference (draft)

The role of the steering group is to:

- Provide a strategic steer to the initiative including
 - advice on strategic planning and project delivery mechanisms
 - advice and agreement on the use of funds and their allocation
 - advice on the best use and allocation of project roles such including business fellows
 - input from employers on perceptions and priorities, and the need for M level professional development.

Membership

Debra Humphris (Chair), Pro Vice-Chancellor Education
Malcolm Ace, Director of Finance
Alison Fuller, Professor of Education and Work, School of Education
Ian Giles, Director, Learning & Teaching Enhancement Unit
Jeremy Kilburn, Dean, Faculty of Education, Science and Maths
Rachel Mills, Associate Dean (Education), Faculty of Education, Science and Maths
Hilary Smith, Head of Faculty Team, Research and Innovation Services
Don Spalinger, Director of Corporate Relationships, Research and Innovation Services
Janice Rippon, Director of Student Services

Employer/Sector representatives

Ashley Curzon, Strategic Manager - Economy and Skills, Isle of Wight Council
Sally Lynskey, Chief Executive, Business Southampton
Brian Murphy*, Research Director, COGENT (*Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, Oil and Gas, Nuclear, Petroleum and Polymer Industries*)
Jonathan Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Marine South East (or alternate)

** Unable to attend 26th February meeting*

Employer/ /Sector representatives to be confirmed

Barbara Smith, Director of Employability and Skills, SEEDA

Others reporting to steering group

Brenda Johnston, Researcher, School of Education, (Evaluation Team)

Pat Maier, Director, EEI

Mary Morrison, Director EEI

Employer Engagement Initiative Steering Group Meetings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
26 February 2009	0900 - 1100
10 June 2009	1400 - 1600
10 September 2009	1400 - 1600
10 December 2009	0900 - 1100
10 March 2010	0900 - 1100
10 June 2010	1400 - 1600

MSM 13 Feb 09

Appendix C Evaluation interview questions

Evaluation Phase 1: Interview questions/areas for discussion

Role of the person being interviewed

What is your role in the university?

What is your role in the Initiative?

Understandings of the Initiative

What are your understandings of the Initiative and its goals?

(including relationship to working processes, working structures, engagement with employers)

Potential impacts on your area of work

What are the potential impacts on your area of work? (e.g. personal workload, working processes, working structures, engagements with employers)

Place of the Initiative in the bigger picture

Where does the Employer Engagement Initiative sit in the bigger picture of priorities and demands within the institution/in your area?

Factors facilitating the Initiative

What are the factors facilitating the Initiative in your area? (e.g. culture, structures)

Obstacles to achieving the aims of the Initiative

What are the factors likely to be obstacles to achieving the aims of the Initiative in your area? (e.g. culture, structures)

Key events

Are there key events/changes that have to happen in order for the EEI to have effects in your area?

What are these? (processes, structures, culture)

Communication between different strands of the Initiative

How does communication work between XX and the other strands of the project?

How are the different strands linking together?

Contributions of the Employer Engagement Initiative

What is the Employer Engagement Initiative adding to what already exists?

Initial effects of the Initiative

Have there been any initial effects of the Initiative.

Evaluation Phase 2: Interview questions/areas for discussion

Contributions of the Employer Engagement Initiative so far

Looking back, what has the Employer Engagement initiative contributed including the different dimensions of the initiative (e.g. business fellows)

Can you think of examples of things that are happening now that you think wouldn't have happened without the EEI?

Nature of the contribution – e.g. change in culture, new provision, new relationships etc.

Have you got ideas about how it could have contributed more than it is doing?

Why have things happened/not happened in this way?

What is the legacy of the EEI?

Contributions of the Employer Engagement Initiative in the future

Looking forward, what do you think the Employer Engagement Initiative will contribute in the short/medium/long-term? How will it make this contribution; to what will it contribute (e.g. wider university strategies re curriculum innovation and employer engagement)

Time over again

If a similar initiative were to happen again, would you do anything differently? If so, what?

Should others do things differently? If so, what?

What should be the same?

Some factors to think about in relationship to the discussion topics which have affected the initiative – university structures, Initiative structure, university and business cultures, lines of authority, events, communication, priorities, timescales, external context, Steering Group, location of initiative in LATEU, importance of having a dedicated project director,

Can you identify factors that have facilitated the EEI and conversely inhibited it from attaining its goals? (enablers and barriers)

Appendix D Steering Group Membership

Membership of the Steering Group changed slightly over the period February 2009 to the end of the Initiative, but the following list represents the core group.

(Document prepared by Employer Engagement Initiative Team – February 2009)

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Appendix E Employer Engagement Audit 2008/9 - summary

Document produced by Employer Engagement Team (February 2009)

Between September and December 2008, each School was visited and an interview carried out on employer engagement, short courses and flexible delivery at Masters level. This was often with the Deputy Head of School (Education), occasionally another staff member with a particular role with employers. The full record of interviews is available on the blackboard site, but below is a summary giving an indication of the scope of responses and a table at the end is a working list of short courses and flexible delivery at M level at the moment. Additionally, there is a list of employer engagement roles which is partly based on information from this audit.

Professional short courses

Short courses. Most Schools offer short some courses, or the option of taking a module from an existing programme as CPD (SOES, Medicine). Some have a wide menu (Health Sciences) others have courses offered on demand (Maths) and some have none (WSA, ECS, Biological Sciences). For a list see table at end of this document.

These courses are a mixture of **credit and non credit bearing** – e.g. Law, Geography and Maths run non-credit bearing courses. Health Sciences, ISVR offer short courses which are credit-bearing.

Where delivery is **flexible** it is often intensive courses (which may be weekend, or blocks of a week or more) as in the case of Management, ISVR, Law. Work-based learning is used in some cases – for instance in Nursing and Midwifery, HCIU. On-line delivery is less common – and usually limited to some elements of a module or course, rather than the whole.

Perceptions of the value of short courses. This varies – where there is clear external demand (Health Sciences) it is taken as part of the standard employer expectation. In the case of maritime law, the annual short course is prestigious and profitable. In other Schools, short courses may not be big earners but are perceived as having other potential advantages – generally increasing employer contacts and increasing potential for other collaborations. In other cases the view is that it is high input for low outcome or feared to be so. Concern also that achieving flexibility (turning modules into online materials for instance) requires large time input.

Generally there is a **central listing** on School sites. Often marketing has not been actively pursued, but there was general interest in having a central listing on the

business pages, although some were concerned about raising unrealistic expectations (ie creating demand that could not be met).

Flexibly delivered M level modules

There is some flexible delivery at this level in most Schools – largely intensive/block teaching, and some work-based learning (mostly in Health Sciences). Some Schools, due to demand as indicated so far have no flexible delivery – e.g. ECS. For list see table at end.

Open Masters

There was broad, if qualified support for the proposal, with some interest in contribution – again qualified. Some were able to identify programme that would be suitable (although the programme leaders would need to be consulted). Others who had some flexible delivery already were not sure that those courses had an appeal beyond a very specific audience (eg Official Stats run from SocSci). Some indicated an interest in increasing flexible delivery but were aware of the costs and time that would need to be invested. The concept of the student driver was also raised as a problem – since the driver is crude, being full time or half time, so students who might be only studying a module incur a half time driver of c. £800, which may completely cancel out income.

Some Schools, due to the career structure in their professional area could see no apparent value in the open Masters for their own markets – for instance Law and Medicine. Others thought the principle very attractive; flexibility, interdisciplinarity, employee/er led, but there were concerns; where would this sit, who would give strategic lead, it is potentially costly (for all concerned), would be huge time investment to make modules flexible/ e learning, potential lack of coherence, value of award (how to ensure M level study when so broad?), how to guarantee admission prerequisites met when students come in on different pathway to the norm.

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Geography	Various short courses validated by the Association for Geographical Information (AGI), concerned with GI and its use. See	The School offers 4 Masters including: MA City & Regional Development* – which is being re-focused on professional groups and

	www.geodata.soton.ac.uk/geodataweb/). They also offer bespoke training.	international students and MSc Erasmus programme on geo-information management and MSc GIS (online) delivered through Geodata with some flexible delivery. * May be scope for increasing flexible delivery / EE – depends on curriculum team.
Maths	Operational Research. Short courses organised on at occasional requests from companies, which are typically special-purpose and designed specifically to meet the company's needs. New (under development) MSc in Actuarial Science may offer opportunities currently under development, but this depends on what the professional body will be doing. National networks in Statistics and Operational Research organize PGR short courses for the personal research development. Southampton is involved in delivering some of these.	Run currently 3 MSc programmes: Operational Research, Operational Research and Finance, Statistics with Applications in Medicine. Coming on stream: MSc Actuarial Science. We also have an integrated Masters MMath programme, which is focused on pure and applied mathematics. Several modules on the MSc programmes are run in a compact (short fat) format which enables flexible study. Some lecturers are from outside the School. The MSc Actuarial Science could be a potential CPD market.
SOES	Already offer UNCLOS (Law of the Sea) as short course, and satellite oceanography , possibly could widen this to other technology – linked courses and climate dynamics and climate linked ones	Flexible delivery is quite common at M level (block teaching).
Physics	None	No PGT programmes
ISVR	There are short courses which are part of the MSc programme and some are stand alone. Examples: Vibration Control (MSc module), Insight into Vibration (stand alone) and the Advanced Course in Noise and Vibration (stand alone). Also short courses in both formats on biomedical signal processing and Audiology.	The short courses are delivered as compact courses – generally the Masters courses are traditional delivery with the exception of some modules that can be taken as one week courses.
Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences		
WSA	None	Design Management modules tend to be delivered as compact courses at 40 credits.

Education	None	PCET programmes are already offered to the military and there are new opportunities. These are flexibly delivered and part of a PG award with exit levels at: certificate, diploma and Masters. These are often delivered on site or as residential programmes. Currently have 50 stds PGCE / 20 stds PGDip /M level. All/most PCET courses are part time, delivered in the evening mainly, so accommodating local/regional students.
Humanities	Part time language courses are run for external and internal students selected on a modular basis for a range of abilities – see http://www.southampton.ac.uk/cls/parttime/index.html	The new Postgraduate Certificate in English Language Teaching (Online) www.soton.ac.uk/ml/postgrad/pg_cert_elt.html is a distance learning certificate, completion expected over 2 years, delivered by the British Council in Mexico. Archaeology - Masters' degrees have vocational content e.g. maritime archaeology, osteoarchaeology, archaeological computing. Film and cultural management may be suitable for those in the industry. Throughout the School MA/MSc programmes are scheduled with block teaching on single days (as far as possible), in order to suit students in employment.
Law	Used to have many – but were often not financially or otherwise beneficial, since they diverted much time from research or mainstream teaching. Still have a small number of them but the most is within the Institute for Maritime Law (IML) which has a very well known and respected short course each year – with an affluent circle of interest.	No flexible learning – all delivered as 'normal' student programmes. Might be interested in developing some e learning modules – if time possible.
Management	The School offers evening seminar series which were intended as a hook for further training. There is also a range of short intensive courses such as Building Agile Organisations, Data Driven Marketing etc. Were plans to launch a	MBA offers block teaching for students – at least consolidated to one half day per week – also on some MSc programmes.

	programme of short courses on marketing which would be credit bearing – but this on hold. All M modules are in theory open as CPD modules with or without assessment.	
Social Sciences	No short courses per se – but some PGT programmes, such as the MSc professional studies are intended for professional development. There is also the option to take MSc Official Statistics modules without credit as training.	Both programmes are offered flexibly - the MSc official statistics and MSc professional studies (certificate, diploma and full Masters all offered in both) modular structure with block teaching
Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences		
Biological Sciences	None	No M programmes
Health Sciences	Large menu of health profession courses across the School.	Short courses listed are all (or mostly) related to M level award programmes, e.g. MSc Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care – with some WBL and intensive delivery.
Medicine	None	MSc Allergy – is part time distance learning with certificate and diploma exit awards MSc Public Health Nutrition is block teaching - with certificate and diploma exit awards
Psychology	Only very specific – case proven courses. Recently had a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy course on NHS funding at M level.	The MSc in Animal Behaviour is delivered in a compact format (one week/module).

Appendix two: List of Employer Engagement related roles

Institutional

- 14. Careers officers/ staff**
- 15. DVC research/ Research and Innovation Services staff.**
- 16. Employer Engagement Initiative team**

Faculty

- 17. Associate Deans Enterprise.**
- 18. Employability Coordinators** – three at Faculty level but also others e.g. Paul Hughes – School of Geography employability coordinator, and Liz Williams (Lecturer in law with responsibility for employability skills in School of Law).

School

- 19. DHoS Enterprise** - one in each School appointed by late 2008.
- 20. London Technology Network fellows**, role is as industrial liaison with a focus on KT, six in UoS:
 - Ashley Pringle - Medicine
 - Paul Townsend - Medicine
 - Jodie Babister - Medicine
 - Mohamed Torbati - Engineering Sciences
 - Joern Werner - Biological Sciences
 - Nick Harris - Electronics & Computer Science
 - Mike Byfield - CEE
- 21. Industrial liaison tutors** (or similar). Normally academics – the main purpose of appointment was to find placements for students. More common in engineering group, such as
 - Stephen Turnock (Ship/ SES)
 - Kenji Takeda (Aero/ SES)
 - Jonathan Swingler (Mech/SES)
 - Dr Anurag Agarwal (ISVR),but also including
 - Jeremy Hinks in Chemistry
 - Liz Williams (Lecturer in law with responsibility for employability skills)
- 22. Industrial liaison officers**: these are similar to 2. above. Two were appointed within the KTA for operational research - Gillian Groom and Ian Rowleigh in Maths/Management. Their role is to liaise with employers and id project opportunities for the Masters students on OR programmes. Each placement costs the employer £3,000.
- 23. Impact generation officer**: current KTA bid for CEE has 2, decision due early March

24. Staff with **Business Development** role:

John Darlington in ECS

Clint Stiles in SES

25. **Development officers** (eg Joanne Donahue in SOES and one other similar post?)

26. **Marketing officers?** Such as Joyce Lewis, Marketing and Communications Manager
ECS, who is main contact for employers on a range of issues.

Appendix F Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI) Communications¹

Introduction

The University of Southampton was successful in bidding for HEFCE funding for an Employer Engagement project. The original bid was for specific employer-related activities and a range of sub-projects to support changes in systems, procedures and staff development. The University wanted to examine flexible provision, to share good practice and to develop pilot courses for distance learning, including technology enhanced learning (TEL).

Changes in University professional services (eg Global Graduates) and EEI experience to date has prompted the EEI to update its Communication Plan. It is not a plan for the future, but a definition of the modes available.

Objectives

The objectives of the EEI's communications are to:

- learn from the experiences of University staff involved in EE activities
- work in collaboration with other University projects, initiatives or groups that share related goals
- investigate employers' perceptions of postgraduate CPD and of the University as a provider/potential provider
- document and share the findings arising from employer conversations and conversations with other agencies (PSRBs)
- share knowledge, information, experience and best practice within and beyond the team.

Strategies

All members of the team are responsible for ensuring that their communications enhance positive perceptions of the University. The Project Director is responsible for reviewing and approving external and internal published communications. The Business Coordinator is responsible for creating and publishing marketing communications. The thrust of the communication strategy is to:

- share information, ideas and plans within the team frequently and informally
- keep in touch with key University influencers, sector bodies and businesses
- collect and document findings 'as we go' to assist in project-end activities
- connect University staff with organisations expressing an interest in CPD provision (or other University services)
- present a professional internet presence for University CPD (web gateway)
- communicate with University colleagues in a timely manner as required.

¹ MARY – do we have to change something in this plan if we are attaching it. In your email you mentioned revisiting the final section and anonymising it.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders listed below have varying depth of involvement in the EEI. Figure 1 (overleaf) shows the primary lines of communication between the EEI and its stakeholders.

Internal:

EEI Steering Group, which includes University staff and external members

EEI Network, ie EEI Business Fellows

Pilot projects, e.g.:

- MSc Sustainable Energy Technologies PG Cert modules & ‘taster course’
- PG Cert Environmental Health

Potential pilot projects, e.g.:

- National Air Traffic Control

University Strategic Research Groups (USRGs):

- Maritime
- Energy

Senior University roles, e.g.:

- Deputy Heads of Schools (Education)
- Associate Deans

Careers Destinations, e.g.:

- Global Graduates Coordinator

Research & Innovation Services, e.g.:

- Staff who liaise with target sectors

External:

HEFCE

EE Exchange Group coordinated by the HE Academy

Organisations we liaise with, e.g.:

- Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies (SEMTA)

Associated organisations, ie those whom we work alongside, e.g.:

- South Coast Design Forum (SCDF)

Potential CPD clients, e.g.:

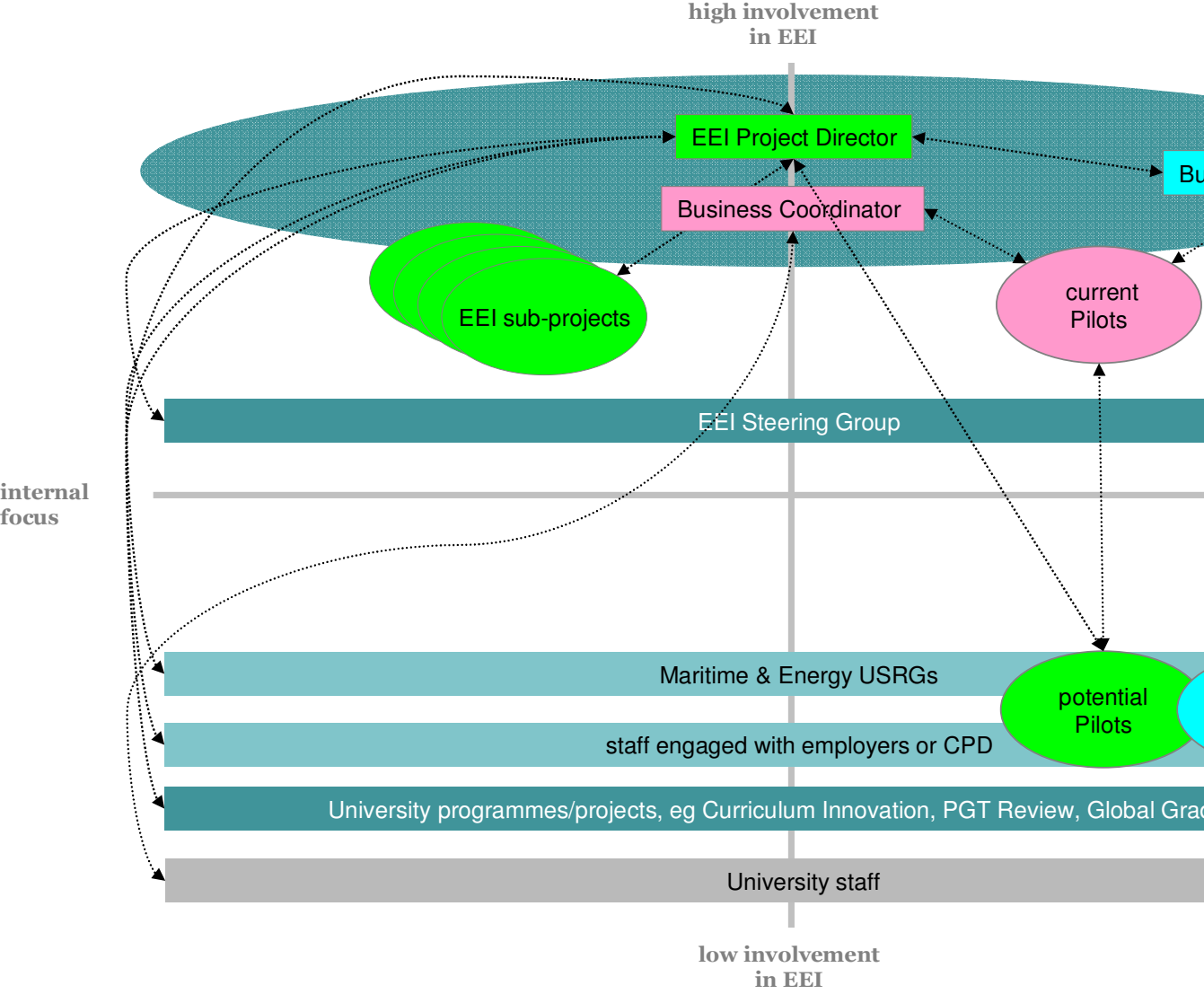
- Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA)

Targeted enquirers, e.g.:

- web, phone or personal contact

Casual enquirers, e.g.:

- web, phone or personal contact



Communications activities and risk status

The EEI uses the following communication methods.

Method	Who for	Purpose	Format and frequency	Responsibility
Team communication				
<i>Business Fellow (BF) Network meetings</i>	All Business Fellows (BFs), EEI Director, Business Coordinator	Share EE information and learning	Face-to-face, monthly, Chaired, Minutes	Business C
<i>Sector BF meetings</i>	Sector BFs, EEI Director, Business Coordinator	Share sector information and learning	Face-to-face, monthly, Notes	Business C
<i>Contact Reports</i>	BFs to document contacts for project records	Capture contacts made during project	Standard template: contact details, bullet points	BFs
<i>Progress Reports</i>	BFs to document days spent, achievements, progress, issues, problems, opportunities, plans for next month	Opportunity to discuss direction and progress	Monthly	BFs (Robe Comunian required)
<i>Discussions</i>	All	Share knowledge and ideas	Informal, as required	All respon
<i>Diaries</i>	All	Share availability and plans	Keep up-to-date weekly	All respon
<i>EEI SUSSED Group</i>	All	Hold all Contact Reports, Progress reports, other team Reports, Agendas, Minutes	Keep up-to-date weekly	Business C
<i>EEI Blackboard space</i>	All	Background documents	Access as required	All
University communications				
<i>The Voice</i>	Internal staff	Stories: make the content different from an eVoice News piece	Printed Mar, Jun, Nov: book space in advance, provide 150-250 words two months in advance	Business C
<i>eVoice</i>	Internal staff	Event Listing, brief News	Monthly email: provide 75-100 words by 22 nd month	Business C
<i>Events Calendar</i>	Internal staff and external	Event Listing	Updated	Business C

Method	Who for	Purpose	Format and frequency	Responsibility
			regularly by Corporate Events (Lee)	
<i>SUSSED</i>	Internal staff	Weekly / daily News	Twice-weekly, 200 words	Business C
		Business and industry marketing	Website, all corporate messages	<i>RIS</i> : Emm Connolly, Egan <i>Web</i> : Dou, <i>Web copyw</i> Andrew D Business C
<i>Faculty Media Officers</i>	Internal staff and external	In support of academic goals	Differs across University (events, publications, journals etc)	<i>Communica</i> <i>Marketing</i> Franklin (I Kathryn C (FESM); S Docker (M Business C
<i>Press Releases</i>	Media contacts	Newsworthy items	As required. Identify via VOCUS with <i>Comms & Marketing</i>	<i>Comms &</i> Sarah Wat Business C
<i>Twitter</i>	Anyone, open access	PR	Twitter.com/SouthamptonNews	Business C
<i>Neighbourhood News</i>	Local community	Locally focussed events, news	Print: May, Sept	<i>Comms &</i> Glenn Har Business C
<i>Posters</i>	Internal staff, students, visitors			<i>Digital Pr</i> Business C
				Business C
HEFCE & HE Academy communications				
<i>HEFCE Report</i>	HEFEC EE management	Report activities, outcomes, budget, plans	Quarterly	Project Di
<i>HE Academy Exchange Group</i>	Directors of all UK Employer Engagement projects	Share experience, learning, ideas, best practice	2-monthly	Project Di
External communications				
<i>University ‘business gateway’</i>	Business and industry	External face of University for CPD	Ongoing updates	Business C
<i>Generic flyers (Maritime, Energy)</i>	Potential CPD clients (employers) and interested organisations/people	Indicate University capability to deliver CPD and scope of EEI work	Maintain through life of EEI	Business C
<i>Other</i>	tbc	tbc	tbc	Business C

Method	Who for	Purpose	Format and frequency	Responsib
<i>communications/marketing material</i>				

List Name	Type of contact	Format and frequency	Respons
EEI Group 1	Steering group members & people involved in EEI by role	Maintained regularly by Project Administrator	Project I
EEI Group 2	People needed for work/support (e.g. open Masters, online learning, WBL)		
EEI Group 3	People who might be involved/might like to be kept informed		
Feeder Schools	Secondary Schools providing applicants to the University		
Feeder Colleges	FE institutions providing applicants to the University		
SCDF June 09	Registrants to the event ‘Design, Downturn, Recession’		
University Design Community	Internals with interest/involvement in design		
USRG Launch	List of registrants to USRG launch event		
Nav 09 entries	Companies who entered our competition at Nav 09		
Nav 09 Registrants	Exhibitors at Nav 09		
Auto Invite List	Corporate Events list of internal staff who should be invited to public lectures		
Marketing & Media	Internal people with job role in marketing/media		

Going forward (April-September 2010)

The EEI's communication with University and Steering Group stakeholders is established. The focus for the next period will be to work with other University stakeholders in order to establish an improved external presence.

Appendix G Quality Assurance Guidance

Title: EEL and QA

From: Chris Roberts and Mary Morrison

Date: May 28th 2010

Introduction

This paper aims to provide guidance on QA matters which relate to employer responsive provision². It is a short analysis of the current QA provision, making an assessment of how ‘fit for purpose’ it is and what our current procedures allow. It also highlights where changes could or should be made.

The University aims to engage more with employers and to be responsive to their needs, not only in relation to curriculum development but also in the ways in which the necessary QA and underlying administrative systems can support such development. This paper reviews the UoS systems in this context, concentrating on PG provision as that is the focus for our current employer engagement initiative. The University offers a wide range of PG programmes and basic regulations for these are available at <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionV/index.html> (current Appendix 1 below).

HEFCE is encouraging the development of short credit bearing courses which might be tailor-made for specific employers, or even full programmes with employer input. External engagement is a stated University priority, but to cater satisfactorily for employer demands, University systems ideally should do the following:

- a) support responsiveness, ensuring that academic approval, (e.g. for customising existing modules or the development of new modules to meet employers needs), can be achieved quickly but without compromising quality
- b) enable the accreditation of appropriate externally provided programmes and courses
- c) encourage enrolment on a module only as a ‘taster’ to interest students in longer term study
- d) enable study over time, so that students may enrol for shorter study units – for instance a PG certificate which is completed over two or three years – possibly a module per year, or can even enrol for a module in isolation
- e) enable personalised learning so students can accumulate credit for units of study relevant to their professional profile
- f) encourage interdisciplinary study and enable the collection of interdisciplinary credit over time, leading to an appropriate exit award
- g) support staff in managing and developing their admissions and APL processes in line with University policy.

(Note with the current restructuring, the academic units will be the new Faculties, so the QA procedures will need to be amended to reflect that. For the moment, this document refers to the existing School and Faculty structure).

Current approval processes

(i) In the main, the University’s current processes (as at February 2010) for dealing with proposed changes to existing modules or for the addition of new modules to existing programmes can be

² Employer-responsive provision usually involves a shift away from the traditional models of provision (with or without an industrial placement/clinical practice) to a model where the institution responds to the needs of the employer in a variety of ways. These may include: □the provision of bespoke or tailored programmes/courses for particular employers or sectors □the development of (small unit) credit-based learning opportunities □the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) □the recognition of in-house training □learning situated in a workplace or based around a work situation. Such provision may also feature: □the involvement of employers in the design and delivery of programmes □the use of the workplace as a site of learning and assessment □the involvement of employers in assessment □the involvement of private educational providers in the delivery and assessment of the learning. (from Employer-responsive provision survey A reflective report – 2010 available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/employers/EffectiveProvision.pdf>)

dealt with entirely at School level and hence the time taken for scrutiny should not result in significant delay in making such amended /new provision available.

(ii) Current processes for dealing with **new programmes or major changes to existing programmes** involve wider and more complex scrutiny including School, Faculty, some Professional Services, external advisor(s) and the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee, and hence, the time taken for completion of the approval process is often lengthy.

Section 1 of this guidance covers current processes for academic approval mentioned above, along with associated information regarding the University's Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS), Exit Awards and APL. The Quality Handbook contains details of all current requirements regarding academic approval: http://www.soton.ac.uk/quality/approval/ac_approval.html

(iii) Such processes (in (ii) above, relating to programme level approvals) may not meet the needs of those involved in the EEI in terms of responsiveness. In these circumstances it is clearly essential that the University is able to adapt its processes in order to meet the demands of curriculum development – whilst, of course, ensuring compliance with the QAA Academic Infrastructure and maintaining robust quality assurance procedures. The QAA code of practice on flexible and distributed learning³ is highly relevant here – as it raises many issues relevant to provision which does not rely on traditional face-to-face interaction.

Section 2 of this guidance considers those issues relevant to work-based learning, where much of the learning takes place outside the University and in the individual's workplace, and section 3 makes proposals, including for 'fast-tracking' approval at programme level in order to enhance responsiveness.

1. Academic Approval

1.1 Academic Approval at Module Level

The Quality Handbook summarises the types of changes that can be approved by the School **without** reference to Faculty or AQSC:

- *Amending module titles and content across the programme without altering programme aims and learning outcomes;*
- *Amending up to 20% of the programme on one occasion annually, in the ways outlined above.*

This guidance is not exhaustive. If it is not clear whether a proposed change should be considered by the Faculty Programme Considerations Sub-committee, please contact the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (LATEU).

In the context of the EEI it is anticipated that staff may seek academic approval for the following types of changes:

1.1.1 *To modify the content of existing modules, make other minor changes to existing modules, or develop new modules in order to meet the specific needs of an employer or employment sector.*

In general, academic staff should follow current School procedures for submitting module profiles to the School's academic quality committee. Each module profile should be completed fully as required by the University's template (http://www.soton.ac.uk/quality/docs/Module_Profile_template.doc). The School academic quality committee must ensure that any submission does not exceed the limits of the changes set out in the Quality Handbook as highlighted above (see bullet points). It should also ensure that in liaison with the School Office the appropriate administrative procedures have been followed in relation to set-up in Banner.

However, it may be that the School's academic quality committee is scheduled to meet on only one occasion each term. In such circumstances, it would seem entirely appropriate, as soon as all documentation is complete, to either (i) hold an additional meeting of the quality committee or, where this proves impossible, (ii) to convene a smaller sub-committee, led by the Chair, to consider the proposals. Recommendations for approval (or otherwise) could then be circulated electronically to all members.

³ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section2/default.asp>

1.1.2 To modify existing modules or develop new modules incorporating new modes of delivery.

Where the modifications to existing modules or new modules incorporate significant changes to the mode of delivery and therefore qualify as ‘flexible and distributed learning’ we must refer to the *QAA Code of Practice Section 2: Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning (including e-learning)* (Sept 2004). <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/default.asp> ‘Flexible and distributed learning’ is used there to characterise approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that:

- ‘Do not require a student’s place of study to be physically located within the institution (the awarding institution) whose academic award is being sought through successful completion of the programme of study;
- Do not assume that a student’s programme of study is necessarily delivered directly by the awarding institution;
- Do not assume that a student is necessarily supported by staff of the awarding institution;
- Do not assume that a student is routinely working with other students;

Do not necessarily require assessment of a student’s work to take place at the awarding institution.’

It is essential therefore that where academic approval is sought for changes to modules or for new modules where any of the above approaches are proposed, the School should pay particular attention to the precepts set out in the QAA Code of Practice (see attached Appendix). The School’s academic quality committee should satisfy itself that, where a proposal plans to adopt any of the above approaches to delivery, there is evidence of the appropriate precepts being taken into account. For example, if the proposal is to customise an existing module to meet the needs of an employer and to deliver the module on-line, or in the work place, quality assurance would need to focus on specific issues around Delivery, Learner Support and Assessment:

For example (and not exhaustive):

Delivery

- Do students have access to documentation that sets out: the respective responsibilities for delivery (University, module leader/coordinator); module content; intended learning outcomes; learning and assessment methods; schedules for delivery of module materials and for assessment of work?
- Can students be confident that the on-line delivery systems are secure and reliable and that contingency plans are robust in the event of failure;
- Can students be confident that the on-line study materials are of high quality, current, fit for purpose?

Learner Support

- Are students provided with clear guidance regarding their own responsibilities as learners?
- Are students provided with information about the range of learner support available to them
(e.g. identified contact, method of contact, availability of contact; inter-learner support; opportunities for informal/formal feedback on their experience as learners) ?
- Can the School/University be assured that the quality of learner support for this type of delivery meets the required standards?

Assessment

- Are students provided with information about access to assessment materials, types of assessment, assessment criteria, weighting of assessment components, module credit value and credit accumulation?
- Can students be confident about receipt of formative assessment and constructive feedback in terms of how and when – and that it will enhance learner development and preparation for summative assessment?

- Are all on-line assessment systems reliable and secure – for example, in relation to original work of a particular student, confirmation of timely receipt of work.

1.2 Academic Approval at Programme Level

Current requirements

The Quality Handbook sets out the Strategic Approval Process which includes **Procedures for the Approval of New Award Bearing Programmes and Changes to Existing Programmes** - <http://www.soton.ac.uk/quality/approval/sap.html>.

http://www.soton.ac.uk/quality/docs/Procedures_for_Revising_Existing_Programmes.doc

Assuming that the Schools planning employer responsive provision currently have existing programmes to which a range of new modules could be added, the issues around approval would be handled according to 'Changes to Existing Programmes'.

If for example, the programme was planned as a 'distance learning programme' or a significant proportion of modules were planned to be delivered 'on-line', it would be considered by the Faculty as 'introducing a new mode of study' and hence would require written notice to the Faculty along with a rationale for the proposed change. Such a change would also need to be reported by Faculty to AQSC. Guidance on the documentation requirements of a Faculty Sub-Committee can be found in the Quality Handbook: http://www.soton.ac.uk/quality/docs/Documents_Required_for_Academic_Approval.doc.

The relevant section in this paper is as follows:

Scenario	Faculty Documentary Requirements	Explanation
Addition of named awards to 'generic' award (eg new programme pathway) <u>Adding/changing mode of delivery (FT/PT/DL* e-L*)</u>	All standard documentation: Programme specification Preamble New module profiles Learning Resource Report External Adviser Report (and any School response to this) Programme regulations	These changes affect the programme provision to such an extent that they warrant update and resubmission of the full set of documentation *any proposal to include a high quantity of e-learning "at a distance" should be discussed with the e-Learning Implementation Group [now Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy and Implementation Group - TELSIG] through LATEU.

Summary: although there are fairly fast means to change or add to programmes where the changes are minor, the process can be lengthy and relatively time consuming if changes are considered to be major. Additionally this may be the case if introducing a module/ certificate which does not easily link to an existing programme, but is of strategic value to one or more employers. In more general terms, and considering the need to be responsive to employers needs, the above highlights the need for the University to develop fast track, streamlined systems for academic approval of packages of learning, particularly where different modes of study are involved.

2. Admissions, credit and exit awards

2.1 Admissions policy

There is already a precedent for the admission of students on to Masters programmes without a first degree – accepting alternative suitable experience which can be documented or assessed. The basic University policy is thus set out in the Calendar:

2.2 Higher Degree The School concerned may declare eligible for admission to a programme leading to a higher degree:

- a graduate of a University in the United Kingdom or any other appropriate institution of higher education;

- b. a candidate not being a graduate whose qualifications have been specially approved for this purpose by the Faculty concerned.

At <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/admissions.html>

School policies vary, given that some regard a first degree, perhaps a particular first degree, as a prerequisite for PG study and this is unlikely to change, and for good reason. However, there may be steps that could be taken to facilitate admission to PG study for those in employment? For instance, if modular registration is possible, the successful completion of one or two could be an entrance pathway if there is nothing to suggest that experience so far would equip the candidate.

Proposal: encourage the creation of more enabling pathways (in part dependent on having the right administration systems in place), and make these explicit in marketing which is targeted to particular groups. The Certificate in Business Administration allows candidates without a first degree, but with appropriate work experience, to study for the certificate before committing to a full Masters programme.

2.2 Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) and Exit Awards

2.2.1 Credit Accumulation

Ideally, students should be able to collect credit over time and Calendar entries about study time often refer to a minimum but not maximum. However there appear to be no University regulations which hamper or prevent credit collection over a longer period of time (for instance 20 per year per year rather than 60 as a traditional half-time student).

Proposal: to make explicit that study over more than 'traditional half time' is possible and encourage this in marketing where appropriate and possible (although this may have implications for planning, workloads and payment/ pricing amongst other things).

2.2.2 Credit transfer

Ideally credit should be transferable within programmes if there is a good reason to do so – for instance to combine subjects to create a suitable programme of study (eg bioscience and management for a pharmaceutical manager). AP(E/C)L regulations enable this and as they stand allow a student to potentially 'import' a full PG cert (60 CATS) into another programme if the importing School agrees and it is consistent with .

Proposal: make the possibilities explicit to schools and in the longer term, the University should consider if there needs to be a programme/(s) outside the existing structure, where candidates can negotiate their own pathways related to their professional profile. (This should take place within the review of lifelong learning and CPD).

2.2.3 Accreditation of prior learning

Ideally students should be able to import appropriate credit bearing learning from elsewhere or gain credit from experiential learning – but need to demonstrate evidence of the latter. Does this need to be revisited in the context of employer responsive provision?

In the CATS section of the calendar it states that 'Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) (Certificated) Learning [AP(E)(C)L]: The University has devolved arrangements for the management and assessment of accreditation of prior learning to Schools within the general policy set out in the Quality Handbook. Schools may allow APL, APEL or APCL up to a maximum of one-third of the credits required; for example, 40 credits at level 6 or 60 credits at level 7, subject to there being in place rigorous systems that require candidates to provide evidence of how previous study matches the explicit criteria of expected learning outcomes. A lower maximum number of APL, APEL or APCL credits may be stipulated where necessary for programme coherence. Normally AP(E)(C)L applies to optional modules only (ie: not core modules or the dissertation/project). Any School proposal to allow APL outside the above limits must be formally approved by the Faculty.

<http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/cats.html>

Proposal: the current system could be flexible enough, but perhaps we need to make explicit where exceptions have been made in the past. Presumably a link would have to be made to where this does not imply excessive cost.

2.2.4 Exit awards

Ideally students should be able to get exit awards 60 credits for a PG Cert, 120 for a PG Diploma and then 180 for the full Masters. The newly drafted progression regulations for PGT degrees states these as options, and they are often noted in the School regulations, but are there degree programmes where no exit awards are offered, and is it ever justifiable to have no exit award? and – do regs (or practice) hamper or prevent the attainment of exit awards?

Proposal: Some Schools do not encourage this due to the nature of the programme or discipline – but in other cases the possibilities are not made explicit and are not specifically encouraged. The University could encourage this as a matter of course, using the Certificate of Business Administration and MTec as an example. This is of course linked to discussions about module size and modular registration – which we are aiming for in the longer term.

3. Flexible delivery, including Work Based Learning (WBL)

Flexible and distributed learning has been touched upon above. This includes WBL, here taken to mean where a student carries out all or a substantial part of their education and research in the workplace. This poses particular challenges, some of which have already been highlighted within the then School of Nursing and Midwifery's WBL module which has been made available, at different levels, across a range of health professional programmes. Thus, within the University of Southampton a model exists which can inform the development of WBL modules. The procedures would be as in section 1 depending on whether the changes were major or minor, but the University could benefit from the experience gained in quality and suitable administrative procedures already gained within the health sector.

3.1 Gaining from experience across the UoS:

(i) As an interim (and limited) solution, the Schools wishing to introduce WBL could use the WBL module developed by SoNM as a template to meet their collective needs and then seek approval through the normal procedures as above (thus fast tracking would relate to the use of a pre-existing model – and not the de novo approval process in this scenario).

(ii) **We could** streamline the current process through provision of structured templates which ask the key QA questions and refine these according to experience indicated by Schools. This is also something which could be offered a specific fast track approval (see 4.1 below).

(iii) **We could create a 'Professional Development' suite of generic modules at M level** (including WBL modules) which have been approved by the University and which can be readily accessed by any School 'off the shelf'. Clusters of modules could also be appropriately structured in terms of compatibility and credit to provide exit awards at M level. However, given that currently, programmes are 'owned' by Schools this approach may raise further issues around academic administration. These issues are being pursued via the CPD review and the PGT review – but we should continue to work with them to ensure a robust but fit for purpose QA to support them.

(iv) **We should consider the wider issues of flexible delivery in HE** and establish a team which facilitates and supports the development and academic approval of modules with different (non-traditional) modes of delivery - flexible/distance/e-learning /WBL. The approval process could be the fast track referred to in 4.1. Schools should be encouraged to work cooperatively in creating generic packages wherever feasible.

The undoubted cost implications of providing the services of such a team might be offset by the appeal of the modules to new client groups, and the improved effectiveness and efficiency of use of University facilities/space etc. for existing taught programmes.

(v) Accreditation of external or in-house provision: this may become an increasing area of interest, for instance where an employer wishes to change their standard training into a transferable HE qualification. There are successful precedents for this, for instance the Rolls Royce input to the Masters in Marine Technology or the Masters in Official Statistics, and such programme opportunities arise from time to time. The appropriate procedures are within the External Relations in Education / Collaborative Agreements and these still stand. However, having guidance about how this procedure has been handled before and the timescales involved would be helpful and time-saving.

Proposal: produce illustrative examples for academics on this particular aspect of ERE.

3.2 Quality Assurance

In order to ensure a high quality experience for students engaged in WBL some specific issues require careful consideration. For example:

1. General principles of WBL so that employers and the University share a common understanding of the concept.
2. Employers understanding of their responsibilities in WBL and the role of the University in ensuring that this is the case.
3. The University's policies and procedures on approving mentors.
4. Staff development and guidance for all staff involved in WBL – e.g. University coordinators, administrators, mentors, employers/managers.
5. Students' understanding of their responsibilities and rights when undertaking WBL.
6. Student support and information – induction, University support services, handbooks including assessment details, on-line support etc
7. Dealing with issues/complaints relating to WBL provision.
8. Staff and student evaluation of a WBL module (this would clearly need to use a different format from current University standard forms).

3.3 Additional issues

Drawing in particular, on the experience gained by the Nursing in the development and operation of its WBL module the following issues have emerged. All of these issues point towards cost implications which largely relate to time but may have an effect on quality.

1. WBL may be viewed as an easy option by individual participant or employer (cheap, quick, not involving off-site study etc). Therefore, in discussing the principles of WBL with prospective employers/learners the advantages of WBL along with realistic views on commitment need to be communicated effectively.
2. Students need more support than envisaged. WBL can become tutor/support intensive and therefore the need to provide guidance, which for example, sets out expectations regarding how much time will be made available to learners particularly by mentors, is essential.
3. Students may take time to adapt to a return to study and/or the demands of self study particularly at HE level, so this may be a specific issue for enhanced student induction and support.
4. Lack of workload reduction to enable self study. Some guidance for employers may be required in order to highlight potential issues.
5. Tracking of students is administratively intensive and therefore robust systems (which include effective communication) need to be in place.
6. Overall coordination of the WBL process/partnership requires levels of planning, organisation and management which are more time consuming than standard delivery of modules.

4. Proposals for Enhanced Responsiveness

It is clearly important that any employer responsive provision, including a fast track approval process at programme level, would be sufficiently rigorous to satisfy the University and external agencies in terms of quality assurance. It should also be clearly defined in terms of its intended purpose (ie and clarify what would be considered exceptional circumstances which would justify change).

It would seem to be most useful to consult with School staff about practice and application of existing regulations, and to test the systems in this document as pilot programmes and courses are developed. There is an online Masters programme in development, an undergraduate programme in planning (which would include delivery by an external provider) and some proposed short stand-alone courses. We should document how easy or not it is to take these forward with our current systems and what additional items need to be taken into account, such as marketing, staff capacity and so on.

Actions:

4.1 Approval process and timing: produce guidance on the aspects of practice of most interest to employers and how these can be facilitated by our current procedures – as outlined above – and consult with new Faculties.

This will mean articulating the current process through provision of structured templates which ask the key QA questions. These could be used for the current processes but also for a proposed fast track where a School could then present the package to an appropriately constructed small approval panel drawn from across the University (possibly acting as a sub-group of AQSC) which has the expertise in flexible learning/delivery and employer partnerships. Clearly, in order to achieve the required level of responsiveness the panel would need to be available to meet at regular intervals across the year – or the process could be set up on-line with panel members responding within an agreed timeframe, via a checklist, to a nominated Chair. The Chair would analyse the responses from panel members and then draft the recommendations to the School.

Documentation and proceedings/outcome papers could be lodged in an ‘evidence base’ accessible to all Schools in order to support future new start-up (hence speeding up the preparation process for them) and to disseminate good practice.

4.2 Admissions, credit and exit awards. A range of other mechanisms can be used to facilitate entry for non-traditional students which are highly relevant to employed students. We should draft new guidance on this (taking into account the individual proposals above) and consult with Schools/Faculties, and this should generate some examples which can be used as illustration. This should also highlight where, if at all QA procedures need to be changed.

4.3 Modes of delivery – produce guidance which refers specifically to non-traditional modes and the relevant codes of practice, and explicitly refer to the Flexible and Distributed Learning Code of Practice (currently not explicitly in the Quality Handbook). The flexibility also extends to encouraging non-traditional students, taking into account the Use our experience, both past and from work in progress, to inform QA processes and ensure that reviews as the new Faculties come into being take this into account. In the case of **Work based learning** – we will continue work with the School of Law to explore this outside the Health sector in order to work through the ideas above and gauge what might be a suitable UoS approach.

Each of these items of work should be pursued in collaboration with the teams involved in the Curriculum Innovation Project and associated reviews.

Appendix 1

Masters by taught course

1. The degrees of Master of Arts (MA), Master of Music (MMus), Master of Arts in Education (MA(Ed)), Master of Science in Education (MSc(Ed)), Master of Science (MSc), Master of Science in the Social Sciences (MSc(Social Sciences)) and Master of Laws (LLM) may be awarded by the Senate to postgraduate students who have completed not less than twelve months' full-time study, or part-time study as provided for in Academic Regulations for the individual courses, to the satisfaction of the School concerned, have passed the required examinations and have fulfilled any other University requirements.
2. The requirement for entry to each course shall be a degree in a suitable subject of any approved university or whatever award/range of experience might be deemed equivalent by the School Board using agreed University AP[E/C]L guidelines. Candidates satisfying the entry requirements may be admitted provided they are accepted by the Head of the School in which they propose to study and the School Board concerned. Candidates with other non-standard qualifications approved by the Head of the School may be accepted by the School Board.
3. Each course shall contain lectures, course work and individual projects as specified in Academic Regulations; and shall be pursued in the University except in special cases as may be provided for in Academic Regulations for individual courses.
4. Every candidate shall be allotted to a supervisor by the School Board on the recommendation of the candidate's Head of School. The supervisor shall direct and advise the candidate in his/her studies and report on his/her work and progress when requested to do so by the School Board.
5. The regulations for each course shall prescribe the written examinations to be taken and shall provide for the examination of dissertations or other assessed work. Candidates shall present themselves for written examinations and shall submit assessed work as required, and shall present a dissertation on their individual project in accordance with the leaflet *The Production and Submission of Postgraduate Masters Degree Dissertations*, (available to candidates through the School Office or on the University website), and with School requirements. Candidates may also be required to attend for an oral examination. In conducting the oral examination, arrangements will be made where necessary to accommodate the requirements of students with special communication needs. The regulations may provide for the award of the degree with distinction.
6. With the permission of the School Board a candidate failing to satisfy the examiners may, on one subsequent occasion, sit a supplementary examination and/or re-submit a dissertation and/or other assessed work by a date to be specified by the School Board.
7. A candidate who fails to comply with the timetable and re-examination arrangements specified by the School Board shall be deemed to have failed the examination.

Masters by Research

1. The degree of Master of Research (MRes) may be awarded by the Senate to postgraduate students who have satisfactorily completed not less than 12 months' full time study as prescribed by the School concerned.
2. The requirement for candidature shall normally be a degree in a suitable subject of any approved university or whatever award/range of experience might be deemed equivalent by the School Board using agreed University AP[E/C]L guidelines. Candidates satisfying the entry requirement may be admitted provided they are accepted by the Head of the School in which they propose to study, and the School Board concerned. Candidates with other non-standard qualifications approved by the Head of the School may be accepted by the School Board.
3. Every candidate shall be allocated to a supervisor nominated by the Head of the School concerned, and approved by the School Board. The supervisor shall direct and advise the candidate in his/her studies and report on his/her work and progress when asked to do so by the School Board.
4. Candidates shall present themselves for written examinations as prescribed by Academic Regulations; and submit a written report on a piece of original research, on a topic and by a date prescribed by the Head of the School concerned, in accordance with School requirements.
5. With the permission of the School Board a candidate failing to satisfy examiners may, on one subsequent occasion, sit a supplementary examination and/or submit a revised research report by a date to be specified by the examiners.
6. A candidate who fails to comply with the timetable and re-examination arrangements specified by the School Board shall be deemed to have failed the examination.

Appendix 2

The Precepts (QAA Code of Practice Section 2)

PART A

A1 The awarding institution is responsible for the academic standards of all awards granted in its name.

A2 The academic standards of all awards made under a collaborative arrangement should meet the expectations of the UK Academic Infrastructure. This applies equally to awards made as a result of FDL arrangements.

A3 Collaborative arrangements should be negotiated, agreed and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the awarding institution.

A4 An up-to-date and authoritative record of the awarding institution's collaborative partnerships and agents, and a listing of its collaborative programmes operated through those partnerships or agencies, should form part of the institution's publicly available information. This also applies to FDL programmes where these warrant a separate identification.

A5 The awarding institution should inform any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB), which has approved or recognised a programme that is the subject of a possible or actual collaborative arrangement, of its proposals and of any final agreements which involve the programme. This applies equally to programmes for which significant FDL arrangements are developed after the programme has been approved or recognised. In any case, the status of the programme in respect of PSRB recognition should be made clear to prospective students.

A6 The awarding institution's policies and procedures should ensure that there are adequate safeguards against financial or other temptations that might compromise academic standards or the quality of learning opportunities.

A7 Collaborative arrangements should be fully costed and should be accounted for accurately and fully. This applies equally to FDL arrangements.

A8 The educational objectives of a partner organisation should be compatible with those of the awarding institution.

A9 An awarding institution should undertake, with due diligence, an investigation to satisfy itself about the good standing of a prospective partner or agent, and of their capacity to fulfil their designated role in the arrangement. This investigation should include the legal status of the prospective partner or agent, and its capacity in law to contract with the awarding institution.

A10 There should be a written and legally binding agreement or contract setting out the rights and obligations of the parties and signed by the authorised representatives of the awarding institution and the partner organisation or agent.

A11 The agreement or contract should make clear that any 'serial' arrangement whereby the partner organisation offers approved collaborative and/or FDL provision elsewhere or assigns, through an arrangement of its own, powers delegated to it by

the awarding institution, may be undertaken only with the express written permission of the awarding institution in each instance. The awarding institution is responsible for ensuring that it retains proper control of the academic standards of awards offered through any such arrangements (see also paragraph 20 of the Introduction).

A12 The awarding institution is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the quality of learning opportunities offered through a collaborative arrangement is adequate to enable a student to achieve the academic standard required for its award. This applies equally to learning opportunities offered through FDL arrangements.

A13 An awarding institution that engages with another authorised awarding body jointly to provide a programme of study leading to a dual or joint academic award should be able to satisfy itself that it has the legal capacity to do so, and that the academic standard of the award, referenced to the *FHEQ* (the *SCQF* in Scotland), meets its own expectations, irrespective of the expectations of the partner awarding body.

A14 The scope, coverage and assessment strategy of a collaborative programme should be described in a programme specification that refers to relevant subject benchmark statements and the level of award, and that is readily available and comprehensible to stakeholders. This applies equally to programmes offered through FDL arrangements.

A15 The awarding institution should make appropriate use of the *Code* to ensure that all aspects of the *Code* relevant to the collaborative arrangement are addressed by itself and/or the partner organisation, and should make clear respective responsibilities of the awarding institution and a partner organisation in terms of addressing the precepts of the *Code*. This applies equally to FDL arrangements that involve other organisations.

A16 In the case of a collaborative or FDL arrangement with a partner organisation, or engagement with an agent, the awarding institution should be able to satisfy itself that the terms and conditions that were originally approved have been, and continue to be, met.

A17 The awarding institution should be able to satisfy itself that staff engaged in delivering or supporting a collaborative programme are appropriately qualified for their role, and that a partner organisation has effective measures to monitor and assure the proficiency of such staff. This applies equally to staff engaged in delivering or supporting an FDL programme.

A18 The awarding institution should ensure that arrangements for admission to the collaborative or FDL programme take into account the precepts of Section 10 of the Agency's *Code of practice* on Student recruitment and admissions (2001), or any successor document.

A19 The awarding institution is responsible for ensuring that the outcomes of assessment for a programme provided under a collaborative or FDL arrangement meet the specified academic level of the award as defined in the *FHEQ* (or *SCQF* in Scotland), in the context of the relevant subject benchmark statement(s).

A20 The awarding institution should ensure that a partner organisation involved in the assessment of students understands and follows the requirements approved by the awarding institution for the conduct of assessments, which themselves should be referenced to Section 6 of the Agency's *Code* on Assessment of students (2000), or any successor document.

A21 External examining procedures for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements should be consistent with the awarding institution's normal practices. This applies equally to programmes offered through FDL arrangements.

A22 The awarding institution must retain ultimate responsibility for the appointment and functions of external examiners. The recruitment and selection of external examiners should be referenced to Section 4 of *Code* on External examining (2004), or any successor document.

A23 External examiners of collaborative programmes must receive briefing and guidance approved by the awarding institution sufficient for them to fulfil their role effectively. This applies equally to FDL programmes.

A24 An awarding institution should ensure that:

- it has sole authority for awarding certificates and transcripts relating to the programmes of study delivered through collaborative arrangements. This applies equally to programmes delivered through FDL arrangements;
- the certificate and/or transcript records (a) the principal language of instruction where this was not English, and (b) the language of assessment if that was not English*. Where this information is recorded on the transcript only, the certificate should refer to the existence of the transcript;
- subject to any overriding statutory or other legal provision in any relevant jurisdiction, the certificate and/or the transcript should record the name and location of any partner organisation engaged in delivery of the programme of study.

* except for awards for programmes or their elements relating to the study of a foreign language where the principal language of assessment is also the language of study.

* Reference in this section of the *Code* to 'foreign language' or a language that is 'not English' does not include programmes provided and assessed by Welsh institutions in the Welsh language.

A25 The minimum level of information that prospective and registered students should have about a collaborative programme is the programme specification approved by the awarding institution. This applies equally to an FDL programme.

A26 The information made available to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme should include information to students about the appropriate channels for particular concerns, complaints and appeals, making clear the channels through which they can contact the awarding institution directly. This applies equally for students registered on an FDL programme.

A27 The awarding institution should monitor regularly the information given by the partner organisation or agent to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme. This applies equally to students registered on an FDL programme.

A28 The awarding institution should ensure that it has effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to its collaborative provision, and provision offered through FDL arrangements.

PART B

B1 Students should have access to:

- documents that set out the respective responsibilities of the awarding institution and the programme presenter for the delivery of an FDL programme or element of study;
- descriptions of the component units or modules of an FDL programme or element of study, to show the intended learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods of the unit or module;
- a clear schedule for the delivery of their study materials and for assessment of their work.

B2 The awarding institution, whether or not working through a programme presenter, should ensure that students can be confident that:

- any FDL programme or element offered for study has had the reliability of its delivery system tested, and that contingency plans would come into operation in the event of the failure of the designed modes of delivery;
- the delivery system of an FDL programme or element of study delivered through e-learning methods is fit for its purpose, and has an appropriate availability and life expectancy;
- the delivery of any study materials direct to students remotely through, for example, e-learning methods or correspondence, is secure and reliable, and that there is a means of confirming its safe receipt;
- study materials, whether delivered through staff of a programme presenter or through web-based or other distribution channels, meet specified expectations of the awarding institution in respect of the quality of teaching and learning-support material for a programme or element of study leading to one of its awards;
- the educational aims and intended learning outcomes of a programme delivered through FDL arrangements are reviewed periodically for their continuing validity and relevance, making reference to the precepts of Section 7 of the Agency's *Code* on Programme approval, monitoring and review (2000), or any successor document.

B3 Prospective students should receive a clear and realistic explanation of the expectations placed upon them for study of the FDL programme or elements of study, and for the nature and extent of autonomous, collaborative and supported aspects of learning.

B4 Students should have access to:

- a schedule for any learner support available to them through timetabled activities, for example tutorial sessions or web-based conferences;
- clear and up-to-date information about the learning support available to them locally and remotely for their FDL programme or elements of study;
- documents that set out their own responsibilities as learners, and the commitments of the awarding institution and the support provider (if appropriate) for the support of an FDL programme or element of study.

B5 Students should have:

- from the outset of their study, an identified contact, either local or remote through email, telephone, fax or post, who can give them constructive feedback on academic performance and authoritative guidance on their academic progression;
- where appropriate, regular opportunities for inter-learner discussions about the programme, both to facilitate collaborative learning and to provide a basis for facilitating their participation in the quality assurance of the programme;
- appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experience of the programme.

B6 The awarding institution, whether or not working through a support provider, should be able to ensure that students can be confident that:

- staff who provide support to learners on FDL programmes have appropriate skills, and receive appropriate training and development;

- support for learners, whether delivered through staff of a support provider or through web-based or other distribution channels, meets specified expectations of the awarding institution for the quality of learner support for a programme of study leading to one of its awards.

B7 Students should have access to:

- information on the ways in which their achievements will be judged, and the relative weighting of units, modules or elements of the programme in respect of assessment overall;
- timely formative assessment on their academic performance to provide a basis for individual constructive feedback and guidance, and to illustrate the awarding institution's expectations for summative assessment.

B8 The awarding institution, whether or not working through a programme presenter or support provider, should ensure that students can be confident that:

- their assessed work is properly attributed to them, particularly in cases where the assessment is conducted through remote methods that might be vulnerable to interception or other interference;
- those with responsibility for assessment are capable of confirming that a student's assessed work is the original work of that student only, particularly in cases where the assessment is conducted through remote methods;
- any mechanisms, such as web-based methods or correspondence, for the transfer of their work directly to assessors, are secure and reliable, and that there is a means of proving or confirming the safe receipt of their work.

Appendix H Roberta Comunian's Social Network Analysis Report

Knowledge and business engagement networks in the Maritime Studies University Strategic Research Group (USRG), University of Southampton

Report by
Dr Roberta Comunian, Business Fellow
Employer Engagement Initiative

Acknowledgments

The report and research work conducted by Dr Roberta Comunian is part of the Employer Engagement Initiative at the University of Southampton funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). We would like to thank the Employer Engagement Initiative Steering Group for the support and guidance provided during the project and Professor Ajit Sheno, Chair of the Maritime Studies USRG at the University of Southampton.

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Executive Summary

The report summarises the findings and outcomes of a research project, commissioned as part of the HEFCE-funded Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI) at the University of Southampton. The ultimate aim of these funds was to increase employer responsive provision in higher education and to focus in particular on the development and delivery of provision co-funded by employers.

As a research intensive institution, the University intended that any education or training provision developed or prompted by the EEI would relate to existing research expertise, and rely on interdisciplinary collaborations; so understanding the academics' views, their internal collaborations and their external engagements is crucial to future development. Furthermore, the aim was to learn from and build upon existing practice and experience, and gather evidence for proposals for change. This research project was an opportunity to gather some of that data.

Maritime Studies was a designated area of interest for the project as the University of Southampton has particular expertise here, and in 2009, a cross disciplinary University Strategic Research Group (USRG) was launched, aiming to promote, connect and reinforce the role of academic research in this field. It provided a broad sample of academic staff with which to work.

We therefore set out to map the knowledge and collaborative networks established by academics and other research and support staff within Maritime Studies. By involving staff in a research project we provided ourselves with an excellent communications opportunity to discuss in detail the EEI, employer engagement and professional development with a range of academics and support staff.

Interdisciplinary collaboration and employer engagement are essential facilitators of employer responsive provision, and the study results (see Summary of Key Findings) aim to inform our institutional strategies and procedures, in terms of:

1. how the institution can best coordinate, support and maximise the benefit from our engagement with employers;
2. how the University can best enhance its research agenda and add value to existing collaborations, including CPD opportunities; and
3. identifying the appropriate support structures and procedures to facilitate employer responsive provision, including means of delivery.

In order to achieve the above, we wished to gain an understanding of the key dynamics in both internal and external collaborations, to document and learn from current practice. It was therefore important to examine processes and experiences, to consider how internal knowledge collaborations were used to establish external contacts and the potential of collaborative opportunities involving multi-disciplinary teams.

As the research involved the Maritime Studies USRG, it also sought to meet some needs of that particular group, so as to maximise involvement in the study. In particular, it set out to:

- document how a range of academics build external collaborations and how this relates to the development of internal collaborations;
- understand the role of USRG-type infrastructures in facilitating cross disciplinary collaboration;
- identify barriers and opportunities for the USRG and external engagement in general;
- develop a research framework and methodology to enable a better understanding of internal and external networks and the support needed for further collaborations (particularly CPD provision).

The findings of this report have already been shared with key stakeholders and an opportunity to use the findings with ECRs has been identified. The institution is keen to use it as broadly as possible. It is intended to share this with the USRGs to help inform their development and to support the University's Education Strategic Plan, by informing employer engagement, external collaborations and the development of employer responsive provision.

Summary of key findings

The decision to undertake this research project, as part of the HEFCE-funded Employer Engagement Initiative, was driven by the potential to contribute to three main goals of the Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI):

1. To inform how the institution can best coordinate, support and maximise the benefit from our engagement with employers

The University and academics interact with a wide range of external actors, but efforts to coordinate this and therefore capitalise on experience and successes have been limited. The research has provided a means to document the current approach of academics (from a variety of Schools) towards employer engagement, both to provide an opportunity to discuss collaborations and the nature of those collaborations, but also to consider the institutional approach or infrastructure which offers support. Interviews and social network analysis questionnaires undertaken were used as communications tools to make academics aware of the Employer Engagement Initiative, asking them to reflect on their external contacts as well as to critically assess the role played by the University and its infrastructure. We also sought to establish how and why academics interact with one another (very important if interdisciplinary collaborations are to be encouraged, as they are at the moment) and how and why they interact with external actors.

Results: The research results highlight a variety of different practices and approaches towards employer engagement within the University. Some of the differences relate to School infrastructure, some to the nature of the research undertaken and the kind of external partners that can be involved and some others relate to the level of experience and career development of the academic. These differences seem to reflect a range of approaches necessary to address engagement in a flexible and adaptive way rather than being owed to structural considerations. In fact, the motivation, benefits and rationale to engage with the outside seem to be shared amongst academics across the whole institution. Furthermore, the necessity and interest for engaging with the outside emerged as a meaningful driver across all kinds of practices. The research reveals for the first time, the range of organisations that the University engages with (in the Maritime Studies field) and gives the University (and its central units) an overview of the barriers and issues which associated with this engagement from the perspective of the academic community.

Key finding: The report highlights that the academic community places a strong intrinsic value on collaboration with external partners. Academics consider this collaboration a two-way exchange; and they value the knowledge, expertise, values and technology outside the University. **Academics' main motivation to work with the outside is to have a more complete and often more grounded understanding of their research as part of the real world.** Alongside this main motivation, academics perceive benefits for teaching (creative opportunities for the School and students), for bringing in funding and for influencing public policy (or industry practice). The respondents indicated that the University infrastructure does not seem to play a very strong role in supporting this – apart from drafting and agreeing the contracts and terms of agreement – but it is not seen as a barrier to strong engagement. However, the infrastructure tends to sometimes slow down the process of engagement and more flexible support services (such as catering, finance etc) were mentioned as areas for potential improvement.

2. To contribute to our understanding of how the University can best enhance its research agenda and add value to existing collaborations, including CPD opportunities

Developing new and innovative opportunities for Masters (M) level professional development is one of the key goals of the Employer Engagement Initiative. The research has engaged with academics and has tried to make them consider in which way their external engagement overlaps

and reinforce their teaching and their contribution towards Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities. (CPD here is taken to include postgraduate programmes of professional interest, such as a specialist MBA, which could be seen broadly as a form of professional development, or short courses which could lead to a full qualification, or individual modules or elements from a postgraduate course which could provide professional development).

Results: The results of the research highlight that while external engagement allows for major opportunities to reinforce and develop teaching activities, especially internships and MSc collaborative projects, developing CPD activities is not seen by the individual academic as a specific focus or as an area of personal responsibility / engagement. While few academics recognised that their proximity to companies and external organisations provided them with an insight in those organisations' training needs and that there was potential for developing CPD activities, many had not considered this route of engagement as particularly relevant for their research outputs. Some of the academics interviewed who held senior management positions (such as Heads of School) had a better overview of how their School could provide CPD for organisations, and of both the potential and limitations. However, it was clear from the interviews with younger members of staff that development of CPD provision was not considered realistic as it required a greater degree of knowledge and investment. Other members of staff highlighted the need for a more flexible service infrastructure in the University to allow CPD to take place.

Key finding: The potential of developing external engagement into CPD opportunities is not a widely shared view within the University. **While a few senior academics had the experience and overview to see some potential in creating further CPD, the majority could not express a specific view on it. The kind of investment and infrastructure required to enable this form of provision is outside a single academic's reach.** From these observations, it can be argued that the development of M level opportunities needs to be happening at the School / Faculty level through dialogue amongst academics, making use of their industrial insights and discipline expertise. However, it also needs to be part of a strategic vision and effort (including specific resources) as the opportunities for CPD are not that straightforward and do not routinely arise from external engagement. Often, there was the impression that consultancy and research projects are an easier solution for companies to acquire the knowledge they need, rather than investing in CPD. CPD seems to be a practice which relates to School or Faculty level decision making, rather than decisions made by individual academics. It requires an institutional infrastructure which supports and encourages this. It was also considered important to find opportunities that offer both parties more, rather than simply provide professional development for income opportunities.

3. To identify the appropriate support structures and procedures to facilitate employer responsive provision, including means of delivery

The EEI aimed to bring about changes to facilitate and encourage employer responsive provision, and this research gave an opportunity to explore perceptions and practice with a particular group of staff. The project aimed to provide a better understanding of the kind of barriers that the University infrastructure presents as well as leading to an understanding of how certain knowledge frameworks – such as the University Strategic Research Groups – might facilitate external engagement. The research not only aimed to inform the EEI and institutional change, but to support the work of the EEI and its Business Fellows. Preliminary findings and research issues were shared during the project to enable a better understanding of academic staff and their views of and approaches to external engagement.

Results: the findings suggest that the USRG – as an intra-University knowledge infrastructure – has created awareness, across different Schools and disciplines, of broader research issues and knowledge and expertise within the University. While this awareness does not guarantee a specific practical outcome (in reference to income generation or actual collaborations being established), it was seen as positive by most academics. The USRG was seen as enabling a better understanding of the strengths and range of expertise available, as well as giving academics confidence in the possibility of establishing new relations. Certain specific issues were perceived as relevant such as

access to and timely catering services, or the difficulties posed by certain financial procedures, but also important was the lack of understanding by industrial partners as to the business of the University, a point made repeatedly in research literature.

Key finding: Most academics were satisfied with the degree of freedom they had to establish external relationships. **They saw relationship development as something not imposed by the University or School, but a matter best left to their personal and professional judgement.** However, particularly for the younger members of staff, there was a need for support, in order for them to be able to maximise their external engagement and to develop further professionalism in interacting with external organisations. Many identified the USRG, the interdisciplinary knowledge network infrastructure, as a potential vehicle to establish and facilitate collaboration internally and externally. Time was mentioned as a barrier in a number of ways, in terms of the time needed both to develop and maintain a relationship, or time taken to process external requests.

Overall, the research project has created a better understanding within the University, and within the EEI, of how academics engage with external organisations. In particular, it has documented the intrinsic motivations of the academic community, as represented by a specific but broad-based group, as well as highlighted the benefits that are experienced. It is hoped that this can provide a way to increase the collaborative dialogues both amongst academics themselves and between academics and the central services at the University (e.g. Research and Innovation Services), which aim to support external engagement.

The methodology adopted aimed to create a framework that can be reproduced to study different interdisciplinary research groupings and also possibly applied in a longitudinal way, thus providing a way to map the manner in which networks and collaborations change over time. It could also be applied to non-research groupings to map internal or external collaboration networks.

Introduction

This research was commissioned as part of the Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI) at the University of Southampton. This was funded by HEFCE, which invested over £60 million in employer engagement projects at various institutions within their ‘workforce development programme’, to increase employer engagement in higher education and to focus in particular on the development and delivery of programmes co-funded by employers.

The University of Southampton was successful in bidding for some of this funding, to engage employers more closely in the identification and expansion of professional development opportunities, primarily at Masters level. Maritime Studies was a designated area of interest for the project as not only is it a flagship area of expertise of the University of Southampton, but since 2009, the subject of a cross disciplinary University Strategic Research Group (USRG), aiming to promote, connect and reinforce the role of academic research in this field. A central aim of the EEI was that any education or training programme developed or prompted would relate to existing research expertise, so academics, their internal collaborations and their external engagements were key to future development. Furthermore, we wanted to learn from and build upon existing practice and experience, and any proposed change were to be evidence based. This research project was therefore an opportunity to gather some of that evidence, while also supporting the development of the USRG.

The Maritime Studies University Strategic Research Group (USRG) is used as a pilot, to understand the way academics and researchers work and connect internally, as a university-wide research group, and the way each of us engages with external partners. We considered this the best platform (and pilot) to investigate the way academics collaborate within a University and the way in which they engage with external organisations. Maritime Studies was also an interesting field in which to undertake the present project as it is a very inter-disciplinary area of research, particularly at the University of Southampton, including experts from various research fields, from humanities to ship science, and from law to oceanography. Much of the discussion is about generic external or employer engagement. This is because research⁴ indicates that there is still a major gulf of understanding between higher education institutions and the private sector when it comes to collaboration and understanding. We believe that this will increase the understanding of our own practices and processes, and have an application across the piece in employer engagement. The key for the EEI was what could be learned about cross disciplinary collaborations (to provide broad professional development opportunities) and external relationships (to identify those opportunities). Cross disciplinary relationships are essential for development of a curriculum to reflect broad employer needs, and we need to understand more about how external relationships arise so that we can learn how best to broaden existing relationships and create new ones. The approach to better understand employer engagement was routed through comprehension of current interactions and collaboration in the institution, in particular:

- To document how a range of academics build external collaborations and how this relates to the development of internal collaborations;
- To increase our understanding of the role of USRG-type of infrastructures in facilitating cross disciplinary collaboration;
- To identify barriers and opportunities both for the USRG and external engagement;
- To identify a research framework and methodology to enable a better understanding of internal and external networks and the support needed for further collaborations (particularly CPD provision).

⁴ Bolden R, H Connor, A Duquemin, W Hirsh and G Petrov (2009) Employer Engagement with Higher Education: Defining, Sustaining and Supporting Higher Skills Provision, A Higher Skills Research Report for HERDA South West and HEFCE, July 2009, available online <http://www.cihe.co.uk/category/knowledge/publications/>

This was to be facilitated by engaging staff involved in the USRG in a piece of research which directly addressed some of their interests as academics in a research intensive university, but which broadened the discussion to include less mainstream activities, such as the provision of continuing professional development opportunities. (Whilst noting that there is of course variation and CPD is well established in some disciplines but not others).

The research began by considering the internal network and then expanded to consider external collaborations. The internal component (of social network analysis) is an important basis for the following consideration of external relations (via analysis of data collected in semi structured interviews). The level of internal collaboration may have a direct impact on external collaborations and contacts, and the structure and features of the internal network and the needs of the individuals and network as a whole may influence what institutional infrastructure and processes best support them. For instance, it may raise questions about how communications take place or how the current structure meets needs.

Methodology & Data

The research project used a mixed method approach, complementing social network analysis (SNA) with qualitative semi-structured interviews. A Glossary of the terms used in social network analysis is included in this methodology chapter.

In reference to social network analysis, the research adopts two different approaches, during the two phases of the project. During the first phase, a ‘complete networks’ approach was used. A SNA questionnaire (Appendix 5) was sent out to all members of the USRG (see Appendix 1). In the second phase an ‘egonetwork’ approach has been used (see Appendix 6) in addition to qualitative semi-structured interviews.

Anonymity and confidentiality are essential when collecting SNA data (see Ethical guidelines documents Appendix 2). Therefore, the internal network analysis does not include the names of the respondents. Schools, research groups and other characteristics of the respondents are used in the analysis.

The aim of the SNA was to map two types of relations: general awareness and collaboration (table 1 shows the definition provided to respondents of the two categories).

TABLE 1: TYPES OF RELATION MAPPED BY THE SNA QUESTIONNAIRE

Relation Type 1	I have heard of the person and I am aware of his / her research interests /activities and strengths but I have not actively collaborated with him / her (active collaboration means one or more of the following: a common publication; a common application for funding; a common research project / consultancy; a common teaching module or supervision of shared research students). In the case of support staff (only), this might include simply knowing the person's role.
Relation Type 2	I have actively collaborated with this person in the past (active collaboration means one or more of the following: a common publication; a common application for funding; a common research project / consultancy; a common teaching module or supervision of shared research students). In case of support staff, an interaction on a project is required.

Sample description

The research has used the list of academics provided by the Maritime Studies USRG as a definitional boundary. This is of course not a definitive sample, as we can assume that other people who are not on this list might have interest in the topic, or that people on the list might simply be there to be kept informed about opportunities (like managerial and research support positions within Schools). Nevertheless, it presents a good sample of academics and researchers engaged in this area across the University. As the list of members indicates, it also includes a wide disciplinary spread.

In terms of a description of the sample:

Out of 150 members of the Maritime Studies USRG, 82 returned the questionnaire (a 54.6% response rate).

The following tables provide a further description of the sample.

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS PROFILE: TIME AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Time at the University of Southampton	N of respondents
N/A	7
Three years or less	23
Between four and ten years	22
More than 10 years	30
Total	82

TABLE 3: RESPONDENTS PROFILE: AGE GROUPS

Age group	N of respondents
N/A	1
20-35	8
35-49	36
50+	37
Total	82

TABLE 4: RESPONDENTS PROFILE: ROLE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Role at University of Southampton	N of respondents
N/A	1
Mainly teaching	0
Mainly research	18
Teaching and Research	55
Support	8
Total	82

It is important to consider that the USRG is a knowledge community involving 15 different Schools or divisions within the University. However, the Schools and divisions identified are not equally represented in the USRG. The four main Schools represented are: the School of Engineering Sciences (with 22 members) the National Oceanography Centre/ School of Ocean and Earth Science (with 38 members), the School of Humanities (with 22 members) and the School of Civil Engineering and the Environment (with 16 members). While the respondents to the SNA questionnaires did not include all the Schools represented, it can be seen from fig. 1 and fig. 2 that the respondents are representative of the distribution of individuals across Schools and divisions.

TABLE 5: DESCRIPTION OF THE WHOLE NETWORK AND RESPONDENTS BY SCHOOLS/ RESEARCH GROUPS

SNA CODE	School and Unit	Number of Individuals in USRG	Response rate	Number of Responses
1	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research	10	40%	4
11	Signal Processing and Control Group	4		2
12	Dynamics Group	1		0
13	Fluid Dynamics and Acoustics	2		1
14	Human Factors Research Unit	1		0
15	ISVR consultancy	2		1
2	National Oceanography Centre/School of Ocean and Earth Science	38	42%	16
21	National Marine Facilities ⁵	11		3
	School of Ocean and Earth Science	27		13
22	Coastal Processes	2		1
23	Ocean Biogeochemistry and Ecosystems	7		3
24	Geology and Geophysics	10		3
25	Ocean Modelling and Forecasting	3		2
26	Geochemistry	1		1
27	Ocean Observing and Climate	5		2

⁵ For the purpose of the research we have considered NOC as part of the University of Southampton and the School of Ocean and Earth Science. The only part of NOC which seems to have a separated function/nature are people employed at the National Marine Facilities, so in some areas of the analysis the two groups are considered separately.

28	(School of Engineering)	1		1
3	Research and Innovation Services	5	80%	4
4	School of Biological Sciences	1	100%	1
5	School of Chemistry	3	33%	1
51	Synthesis & Catalysis	2		0
52	Electrochemistry, Interfaces & Materials	1		1
6	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment	16	37.5%	6
61	Sustainable Energy Research Group	11		4
62	Environment	2		1
63	Transportation	2		1
64	Infrastructure	1		0
7	School of Electronics and Computer Science	3	0%	0
8	School of Engineering Sciences	22	77%	17
81	Engineering Materials and Surface Engineering	2		1
82	Fluid Structure Interactions	14		13
83	Wolfson Unit	1		0
84	Research Institute for Industry	1		1
85	Energy Technology	1		0
86	Airbus Noise Technology Centre (ANTC)	1		0
87	National Center for Advanced Tribology (nCATS)	2		2
9	School of Geography	8	75%	6
91	Global Environmental Change and Earth Observation	1		0
92	Earth Surface Dynamics	3		2
93	GeoData Institute	2		2
94	Economy, Society and Space	2		2
10	School of Humanities	22	77.2%	17
101	Maritime Archaeology	3		2
102	English	5		4
103	Film Studies	1		1
104	Modern Languages	2		1
105	History	4		4
106	History / The Parkes Institute	4		3
107	Archaeology	3		2
11	School of Law	5	60%	3
111	Maritime Law	4		2
112	International Law	1		1
12	School of Management	8	75%	6
121	Management Science	3		3
122	Management	4		3
123	Accounting & Finance	1		
13	School of Mathematics	6	17%	1
131	Pure Mathematics	1		0
132	Operational Research	2		0
133	Applied Mathematics	3		1
14	School of Social Sciences	1	0%	0
141	Politics / International Studies	1		0
15	Winchester School of Art	2	0%	0
TOTAL		150	54.6%	82

Qualitative semi-structured interviews

Alongside the internal social network analysis, a sub-sample of the respondents to the first part of the research project was asked to take part in an interview (lasting between 15 minutes and 1 hour). 21 interviews took place between March and July 2010.

The focus of the interviews was on the external engagement of the academics / participants. The interviews were organized in two stages. Firstly, the respondent was asked to provide a sample of the kind of companies, organisations, charities or individuals they worked with outside the academic sphere (Appendix 6). These data are used as a base for presenting an ego network analysis of the data (see findings 2 part) but also to engage with key issues about academics' external engagement (for more details see interview outline Appendix 4). The key topics addressed during the interviews were:

- The main benefits of collaborating with external partners
- The personal (and career) motivations behind external engagement
- The relation between external engagement and teaching, in particular CPD
- The kind of infrastructures or practices that facilitate external engagement
- The barriers to external engagement experienced
- The role of the university (and USRG infrastructure) in external engagement

Confidentiality and anonymity were provided to the respondents and a confidentiality agreement form was signed by the participants (see Appendix 3).

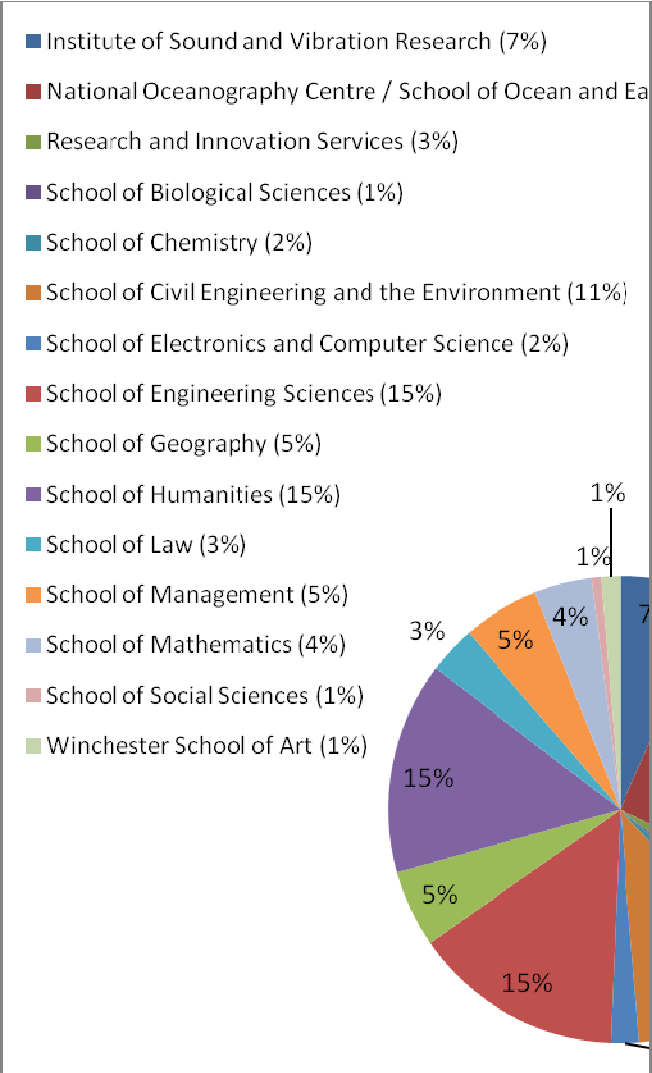


FIGURE 1: COMPOSITION OF USRG

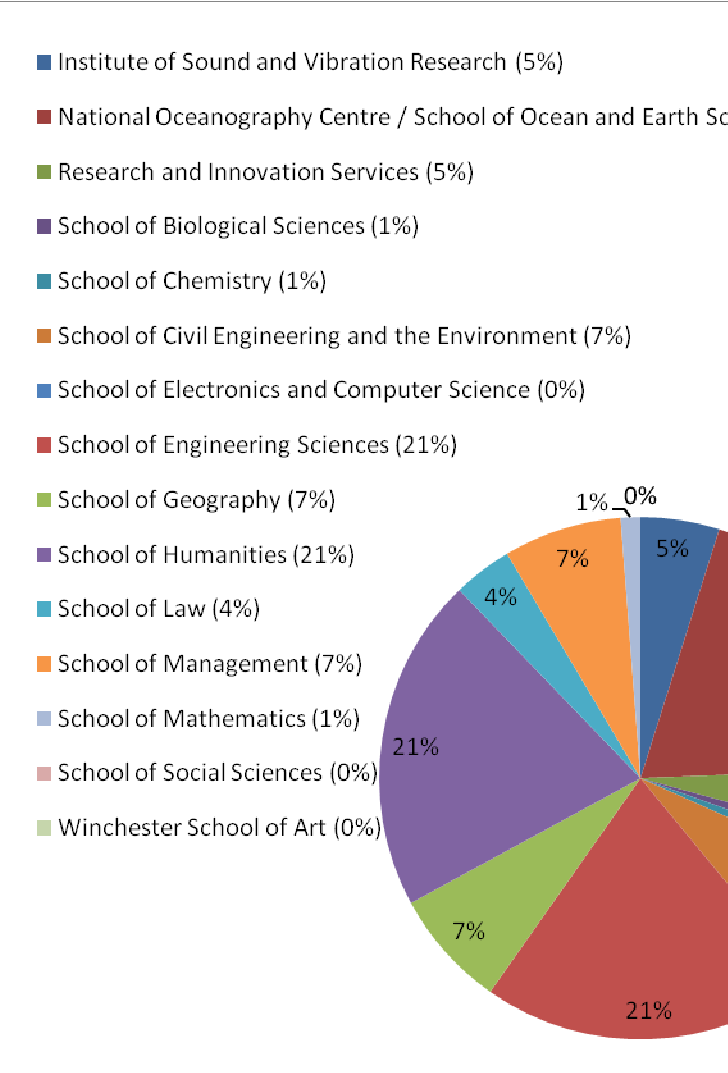


FIGURE 2: RESPONDENTS TO SNA SURVEY

Glossary of Social network analysis

Please note that most of these definitions and notes are drawn from Hanneman, Robert A. and Mark Riddle. 2005. Introduction to social network methods. Riverside, CA: University of California, Riverside (published in digital form at <http://faculty.ucr.edu/~hanneman/>)

Betweenness Centrality: With binary data, betweenness centrality views an actor as being in a favoured position to the extent that the actor falls on the geodesic paths between other pairs of actors in the network. That is, the more people depend on me to make connections with other people, the more power I have. If, however, two actors are connected by more than one geodesic path, and I am not on all of them, I lose some power. Using the computer, it is quite easy to locate the geodesic paths between all pairs of actors, and to count how frequently each actor falls in each of these pathways. If we add up, for each actor, the proportion of times that they are "between" other actors for the sending of information, we get a measure of actor centrality.

Complete network analysis: Full network methods require that we collect information about each actor's ties with all other actors. In essence, this approach is taking a census of ties in a population of actors -rather than a sample. Because we collect information about ties between all pairs or dyads, full network data gives a complete picture of relations in the population. Full network data is necessary to properly define and measure many of the structural concepts of network analysis (e.g. betweenness).

Core / Periphery analysis: When we apply the core-periphery model to actor-by-actor data, the model seeks to identify a set of actors who have high density of ties among themselves (the core) and another set of actors who have very low density of ties among themselves (the periphery. Actors in the core are able to coordinate their actions; those in the periphery are not. As a consequence, actors in the core are at a structural advantage in exchange relations with actors in the periphery.

Degree (Indegree and outdegree) centrality. Degree centrality is defined as the number of links incident upon a node (i.e., the number of ties that a node has). Degree is often interpreted in terms of the likelihood that a node will catch whatever is flowing through the network (such as a virus, or some information). If the network is directed (meaning that ties are directional ie a to b does not necessarily imply b to a), then we usually define two separate measures of degree centrality, namely indegree and outdegree. Indegree is a count of the number of ties directed in towards the node, and outdegree is the number of ties that the node directs outward to others. For positive social relations such as friendship or advice, we normally interpret indegree as a form of attraction/popularity, and outdegree as a predisposition toward gregariousness.

Density: The density of a binary network is simply the proportion of all possible ties that are actually present. For a valued network, density is defined as the sum of the ties divided by the number of possible ties (i.e. the ratio of all tie strength that is actually present to the number of possibilities). The density of a network may give us insights into such phenomena as the speed at which information diffuses among the nodes, and the extent to which actors have high levels of social capital and/or social constraint.

Ego network analysis: Ego-centric methods really focus on the individual, rather than on the network as a whole. By collecting information on the connections among the actors connected to each focal ego, we can obtain a pretty good picture of the "local" networks or "neighbourhoods" of individuals. Such information is useful for understanding how networks affect individuals, and they also give a (incomplete) picture of the general texture of the network as a whole.

E-I Index: Krackhardt and Stern (1988) developed a very simple and useful measure of group embedding, based on comparing the numbers of ties within groups and between groups. It measures how inward looking (or outward looking) a group is, compared to other groups in the network, and allows us to compare the groups and their interactions. The E-I (external - internal) index takes the number of ties of group members to outsiders, subtracts the number of ties to other group members, and divides by the total number of ties. The resulting index ranges from -1 (all ties are internal to the group) to +1 (all ties are external to the group). Since this measure is concerned with any connection between members, the directions of ties are ignored (i.e. either a out-tie or an in-tie constitutes a tie between two actors).

Social network analysis: Social network analysis views social relationships in terms of network theory consisting of nodes and ties. Nodes are the individual actors within the networks, and ties are the relationships between the actors. The resulting graph-based structures are often very complex, yet they offer rich visual pictures. There can be many kinds of ties between the nodes.

Findings – Part I: Internal knowledge Networks

The USRG is clearly a connected knowledge network. There are no individuals isolated – i.e. none who are completely unaware of others' research. The fact that the network is completely connected (with no isolated nodes) is also expressed, in social network analysis terms, as the network being made by a single component (i.e. all the nodes are part of single united network).

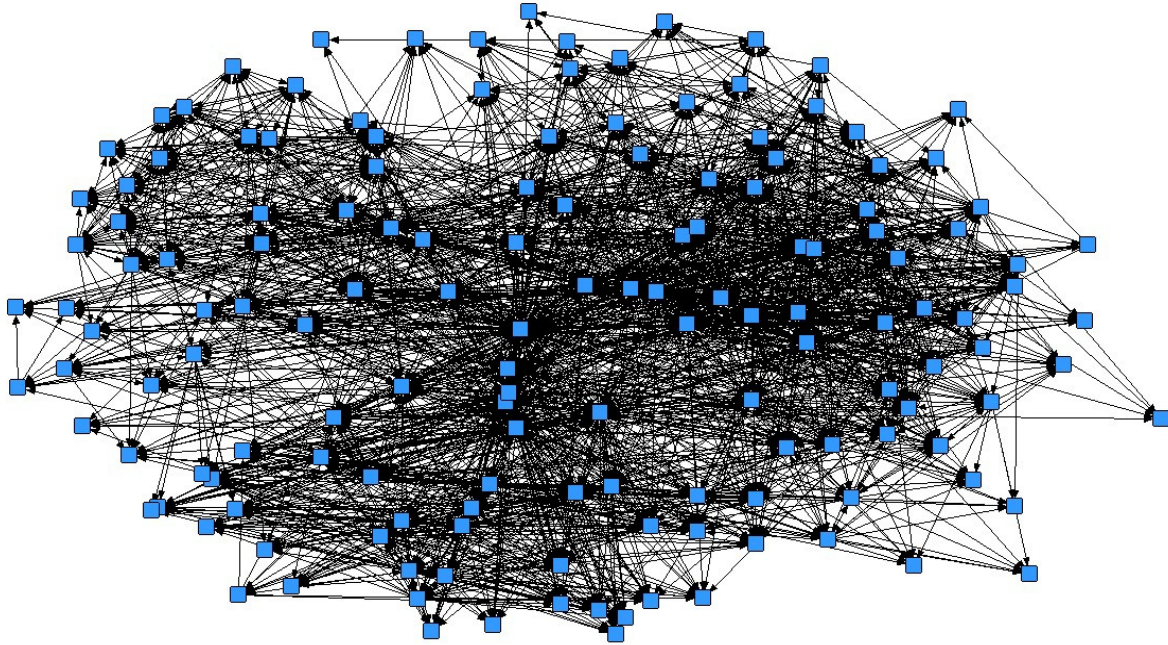
The 150 individuals (represented as nodes) show a great variety in reference to connections. The measure of outdegree and indegree considers the direction of a relationship, outdegree being the number of relationships identified by the individuals themselves, the indegree showing those identified by others (i.e. incoming arrows). As shown in table (1) the range of outdegree (contacts that people named in their questionnaires) ranges from 146 to 5, while most of the respondents have been named (indegree) by 10 to 19 respondents. This highlights that across the USRG the level of interactions and awareness is really varied and we will explore the way this might be linked to the School that the node belongs to, but also his / her academic profile or age group. These findings underline the level of diversity and complexity of interactions, but also the level of individualism of each node, which interacts according to his / her specific interests, social skills and knowledge.

TABLE 6: OUTDEGREE AND INDEGREE

Number of nodes	Outdegree	Number of nodes	Indegree
1	146	1	66
5	79-70	0	59-50
2	69-60	1	49 - 40
2	59-50	12	39-30
16	49-40	48	29-20
23	39-30	69	19-10
13	29-20	20	9-1
14	19-10	0	0
7	9-1		
0	0		
83		150	

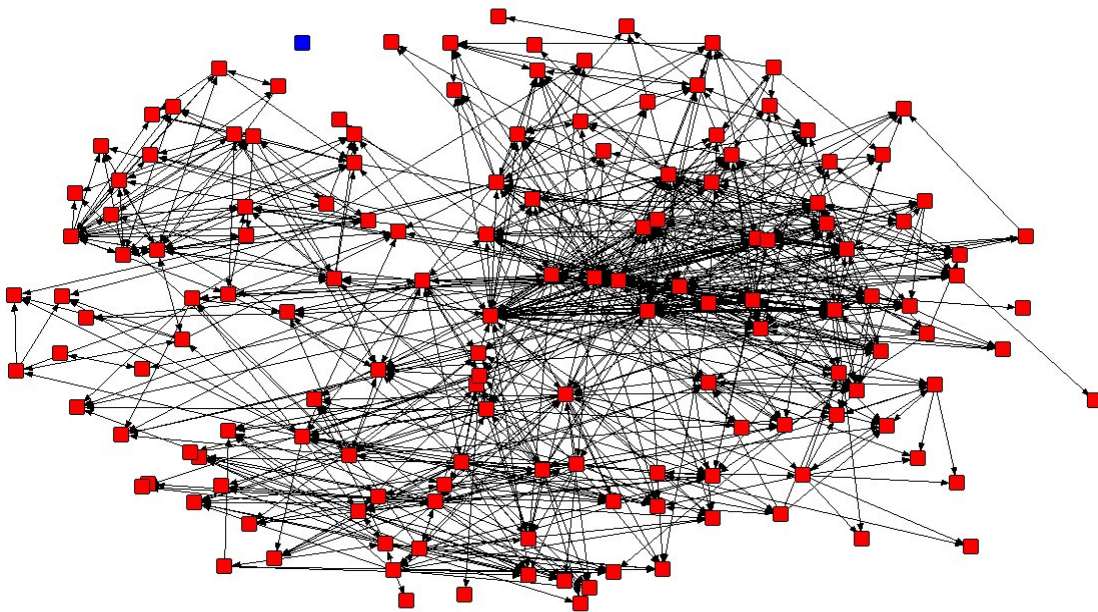
As we can clearly see in Fig.3 the general awareness network is fully connected and it is a single-component network. This means that each component of the can reach every other by some path (no matter how long). This means that any of the USRG members in the network can have awareness of each others' research, or gain access to others via an existing link (passing through others knowledge along the network). All the nodes (academics and other members of the USRG) are represented in blue.

FIGURE 3: THE MARITIME STUDIES USRG AWARENESS NETWORK



When we look at the collaborations network, we can see that it is less dense. Although there is still only one major component (including all the red nodes), there is one single isolate (blue node). This suggests that there is someone who has not collaborated with anyone within the USRG to date.

FIGURE 4: THE MARITIME STUDIES USRG NETWORK OF COLLABORATIONS (ONLY)



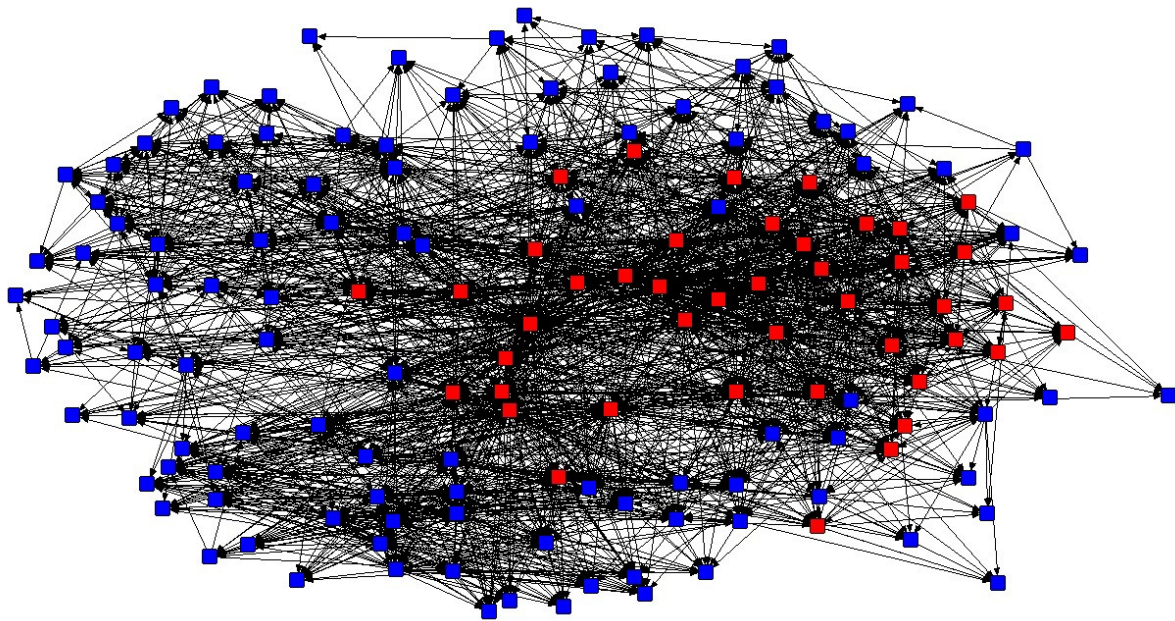
The density measure between the two networks is also interesting. This is the number of current connections as a percentage of the number of possible ties that can be achieved. We can compare the density of the networks in fig. 3 and 4. The awareness network has a density of 16.7 %, while the collaboration network has a density of 8.45% (so nearly half). Of course, as we only have responses from 54.6% members of the network, and assuming that the non-respondents would present a similar type of profile to our sample, we could estimate that in

the overall awareness network around 33% of the potential knowledge connections are realized, while in terms of actual collaboration, the figure is around 16%. This means that while there are many connections taking place, these are still only one-third of the possible awareness relations that can take place within the USRG. There is room for improvement and for this awareness to increase further in years to come.

Core / Periphery analysis

An important analysis is one which enables the identification of the core and periphery. The core is defined by those sets of nodes which have higher level of interactions with each other than others (the periphery). By running a core-periphery analysis, we can observe that there is a strong distinction between the core and periphery. The core is formed of nodes that interact more closely with each other, while peripheral members interact with core members. This implies that while nodes in the core exchange information directly amongst each other, nodes in the periphery tend to receive information only when it is passed by the core and rely on the core to access information or knowledge.

FIGURE 5: DISTINCTION BETWEEN CORE AND PERIPHERY IN THE USRG NETWORK



As visible in the network image, the red nodes are the core and blue the periphery (fig. 5). Measuring the density of these sub-groups and their interaction, we find that the higher density of interactions takes place within the core. A good level of interaction takes place between the core and the periphery (i.e. directional from core to periphery), but the interaction of the periphery with the core and within the periphery is very weak (see table 7). Therefore, we can identify a sort of hierarchical structure in the USRG where a few nodes have direct access to knowledge and exchange knowledge between them and to a lesser extent send this information out to the periphery. On the contrary, the periphery seems quite detached from the core and it might be the case that valuable information (developed within the periphery) never reaches the core.

TABLE 7: MATRIX OF DENSITY ACROSS CORE AND PERIPHERY

	1 (43 nodes)	2 (107 nodes)
1 (43 nodes)	0.695	0.245
2 (107 nodes)	0.071	0.096

It is important to consider which Schools are more represented in the core and which ones are more represented in the periphery, as this relates closely to the way information is circulated and how collaboration can be established and strengthened.

FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF CORE AND PERIPHERY NODES AMONG SCHOOL / DIVISIONS

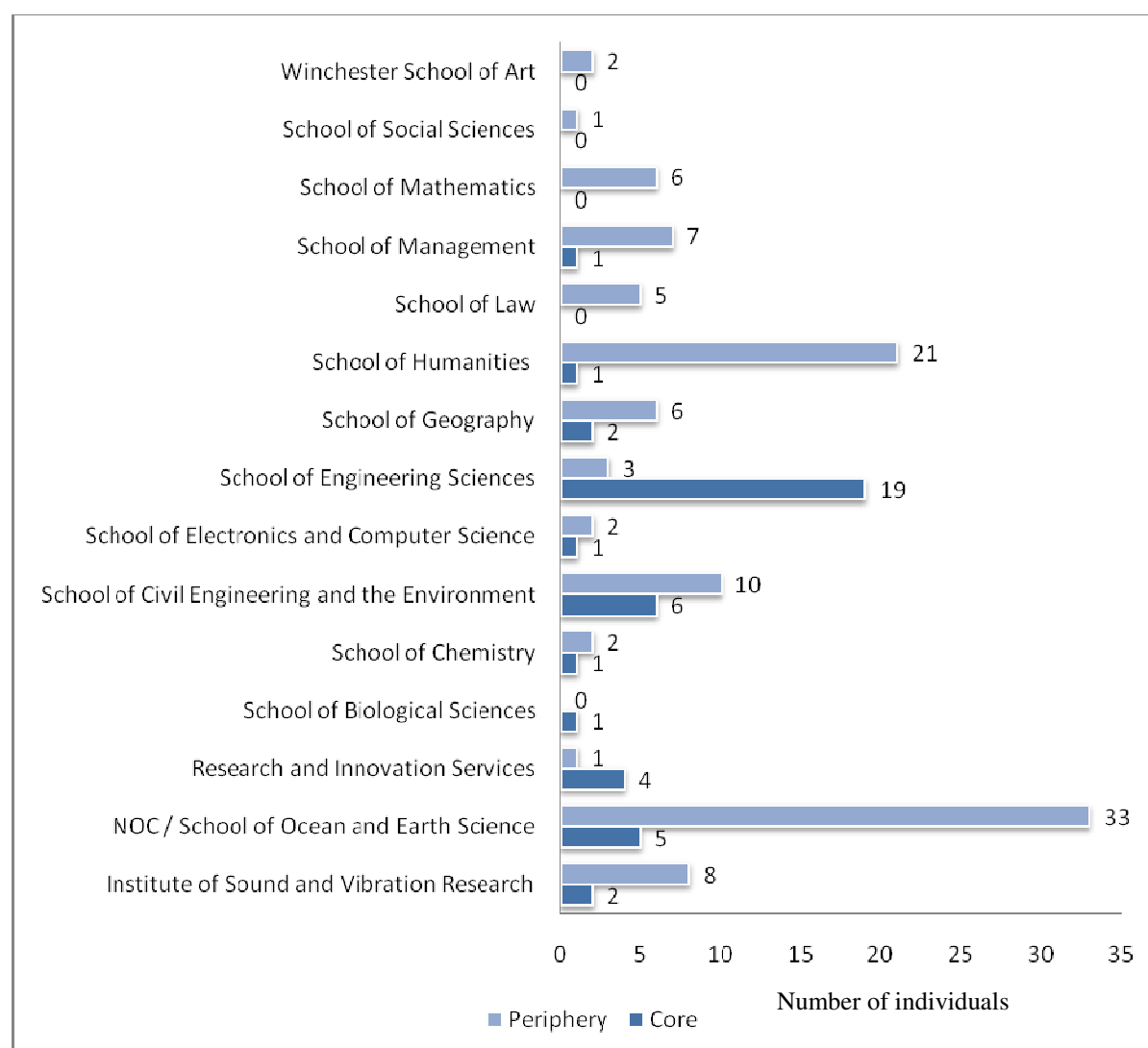


Fig. 6 shows the distribution (as number of individuals) of Schools between core and periphery. The Schools which play a stronger role in the core are the School of Engineering Sciences and NOC / School of Ocean and Earth Science, followed by the School of Civil Engineering and the Environment.

Degree Centrality and Betweenness Centrality

In order to better understand the dynamics of the network it is important to consider which nodes are more central and influential. We use two analyses to identify these. Degree centrality allows us to identify the key individuals in the network in reference to recognition and leadership. These individual have access to more individuals and knowledge resources and are key to the network. Differently, betweenness centrality will help us identify individuals not in relation to their leadership but in relation to their position within the network, being key ‘bridging’ nodes between different type of individuals or groups.

Degree centrality. This is the sum of relations that a node enjoys, and considers both the indegree (number of connections directed towards the node) and outdegree (number of connections sent out by the node). In our network, as we have results from 54.6% of the nodes, we will look both at degree centrality in general and most specifically the indegree centrality. Usually, individuals with a high degree centrality maintain numerous contacts with other network actors. Individuals have higher centrality to the extent they can gain access to

and/or influence over others. A central actor occupies a structural position (network location) that serves as a source or conduit for larger volumes of information exchange and other resource transactions with other actors. Central actors are located at or near the centre in network diagrams of social space. In contrast, a peripheral actor maintains few or no relations and thus is located spatially at the margins of a network diagram. Table 8 considers the (academic) position of the individuals with highest indegree (the most named in the network). The indegree number (first column) indicates the number of other individuals who named this person. Amongst these 25 individuals, 12 occupy senior positions (Professor, Head of Schools or Head of Research Groups). So, while a degree of leadership helps in being recognised in the network, 8 of the nodes represent younger and mid-career academics, indicating that there are opportunities also for younger member of staff to become key players in the network. Although the data on the length of service at the University of Southampton (third column) is patchy, amongst the 14 individuals who provided this information, 8 have been at the University of Southampton for more than ten years and only 3 for less than 5 years, showing that the length of employment plays a role in being recognised within internal networks.

TABLE 8: DESCRIPTION OF NODES WITH HIGHEST INDEGREE

INDEGREE	ROLE / POSITION	YEARS AT UoS
94	Head of research group	-
61	Lecturer / Senior Lecturer / Senior Research	16
53	Lecturer / Senior Lecturer / Senior Research	-
52	Professor	-
51	Lecturer / Senior Lecturer / Senior Research	16
51	Head of research group	15
47	Head of School	-
46	Consultancy unit	-
46	Head of research group	37
45	Lecturer / Senior Lecturer / Senior Research	10
43	Researcher / Research fellow	2
43	Support	6
41	Professor	-
40	Professor	-
40	Professor	17
39	Head of research group	-
39	Professor	-
39	Lecturer / Senior Lecturer / Senior Research	3
39	Lecturer / Senior Lecturer / Senior Research	-
39	Support	2
39	Support	-
38	Consultancy unit	7
37	Deputy Head of School	11
37	Lecturer / Senior Lecturer / Senior Research	4
37	Head of research group	10

Table 8: Role / position of nodes with indegree higher than 35 (including how long they have been working at the University of Southampton, if information available)

It is important to consider the number of connections and their quality (i.e. simple awareness vs. active collaborations).

Amongst the 82 respondents we find a great variation. At one extreme, one person is aware of 146 (highest value) nodes while another is aware of only 5 (lowest value). The average number of nodes (or individuals) that each respondent is aware of in research terms is 34.5. The values are obviously much lower for the collaborations network (as defined in table 1). They range from 0 to 45 (the largest amount of collaboration). The average number of active collaborations for each respondent is 11.7. In some cases the indication of awareness is almost the same as that of project collaboration (87.5% overlap for one of the nodes) for others there is no strong overlap, which can be read positively as people seem to be aware of others' research although they are not their strict collaborators. In general an average of 35.8% of the awareness network represents the nodes with which the person actively collaborates. .

TABLE 9: TURNING AWARENESS INTO COLLABORATIONS

Node	Outdegree Awareness	Outdegree Collaboration	Relation between awareness / collaboration (%)
1	13	6	46.2
4	22	6	27.3
7	27	8	29.6
8	23	12	52.2
9	32	7	21.9
10	46	10	21.7
11	19	6	31.6
19	38	13	34.2
25	53	15	28.3
26	41	19	46.3
27	29	16	55.2
29	32	10	31.3
30	35	28	80.0
31	64	28	43.8
33	40	17	42.5
34	7	5	71.4
35	58	30	51.7
37	Highest 146	44	30.1
38	35	20	57.1
39	39	16	41.0
40	42	14	33.3
41	70	44	62.9
42	37	10	27.0
44	31	2	6.5
45	36	17	47.2
46	46	13	28.3
48	40	6	15.0
50	46	19	41.3
51	18	7	38.9
52	8	2	25.0
53	21	9	42.9
54	7	1	14.3
58	18	4	22.2
61	41	23	56.1
63	36	19	52.8
64	44	12	27.3
67	34	13	38.2
71	13	5	38.5
74	37	12	32.4

78	73	3	4.1
79	75	12	16.0
81	7	4	57.1
85	75	21	28.0
88	41	16	39.0
90	38	7	18.4
92	33	13	39.4
93	36	4	11.1
95	63	7	11.1
98	40	18	45.0
99	24	11	45.8
100	44	7	15.9
105	30	12	40.0
112	18	2	11.1
113	30	10	33.3
114	45	4	8.9
115	20	11	55.0
116	38	2	5.3
118	22	2	9.1
119	11	6	54.5
120	28	12	42.9
121	14	4	28.6
123	21	5	23.8
124	12	4	33.3
125	24	21	Highest 87.5
126	33	3	9.1
127	30	6	20.0
128	43	1	2.3
129	28	7	25.0
131	32	4	12.5
134	14	6	42.9
135	Lowest 5	4	80.0
136	43	Lowest 0	0.0
137	12	3	25.0
138	19	10	52.6
139	17	3	17.6
140	40	20	50.0
142	22	8	36.4
143	8	5	62.5
146	35	21	60.0
147	38	28	73.7
148	77	Highest 45	58.4
149	49	26	53.1
Total	34.5	11.7	35.8

Betweenness centrality. Betweenness centrality views a node as being in a favoured position, to the extent that the node is positioned on the ‘path’ between other pairs of nodes in the network. The measure is normed (expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible betweenness that an actor could have had). There are quite a few differences amongst the nodes which are more central in reference to degree centrality and the ones with a significant betweenness perspective. In particular, looking at Table 10, we can see that apart from one individual (with the highest betweenness), the next twenty nodes have a similar betweenness and are also spread across a variety of Schools and institutions. These nodes seem to function as ‘hubs’ within the sub-disciplines in terms of connecting individuals within the USRG.

These are academics who are generally in senior positions and are either involved in teaching and research, or in research only (only one person was in a support role). As we can see from the table, the betweenness measure is quite different from the indegree, as it is not a measure of simple ‘popularity’ but identifies a function in the network as being a conduit for communications between different groups.

TABLE 10: THE 20 NODES WITH HIGHER LEVEL BETWEENNESS

SCHOOL / DIVISION	Age Group ⁶	Role ⁷	INDEGREE	BETWEENNESS VALUE
School of Engineering Sciences	3	3	94	15.87
NOC / SOES	3	2	52	2.18
Research and Innovation Services	3	4	52	1.75
School of Engineering Sciences	3	3	63	1.42
NOC / SOES	2	3	31	1.31
NOC / SOES	3	3	30	1.22
School of Geography	3	2	26	1.06
School of Engineering Sciences	2	3	53	1.05
School of Humanities	2	3	28	1
School of Humanities	3	3	45	0.93
School of Geography	3	2	34	0.91
NOC / SOES	2	3	27	0.78
School of Civil Engineering and the Environment	3	2	41	0.75
NOC / SOES	3	3	30	0.69
School of Management	2	3	34	0.66
School of Humanities	3	3	25	0.63
School of Engineering Sciences	3	3	48	0.61
School of Civil Engineering and the Environment	2	3	28	0.6
Institute of Sound and Vibration Research	3	3	30	0.58
School of Law	2	3	18	0.53

While the first betweenness analysis highlights the key role played by certain individuals, it is also import to consider the overall betweenness value of different Schools and divisions.

Table 11 and Fig. 8 suggest that two key groups show highest level of betweenness: the School of Engineering Sciences and Research and Innovations Services. They therefore are best placed to be the conduit for information sharing and to connect a variety of Schools and individuals. The value of this is knowing how to get important information out or circulated – using these key nodes will facilitate this.

TABLE 11: BETWEEN VALUE OF SCHOOL / DIVISIONS

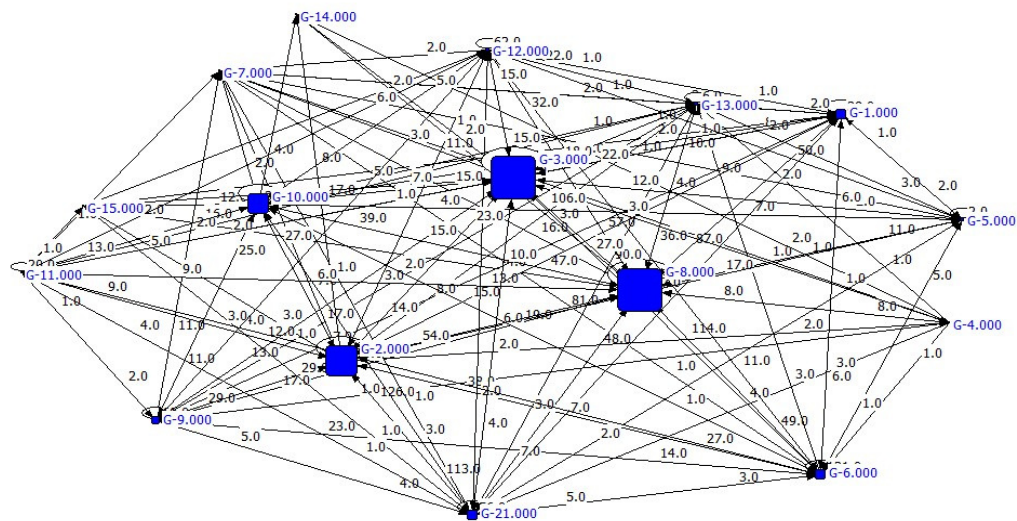
SNA CODE	School and Unit	Betweenness value
1	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research	1.882
2	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science	6.932

⁶ Respondents (when the information was given) are classified in 3 age groups: 1 (20-35 years old) 2 (36-49 years old) 3 (50 plus years old)

⁷ Respondents were asked to classify their role as Mainly teaching (1) Mainly research (2), Teaching and Research (3), Support (4)

21	National Marine Facilities	2.048
3	Research and Innovation Services	10.182
4	School of Biological Sciences	0.200
5	School of Chemistry	0.750
6	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment	1.922
7	School of Electronics and Computer Science	0
8	School of Engineering Sciences	10.182
9	School of Geography	1.625
10	School of Humanities	4.815
11	School of Law	0.125
12	School of Management	0.615
13	School of Mathematics	0
14	School of Social Sciences	0
15	Winchester School of Art	0

FIGURE 7: BETWEENNESS VALUE (REPRESENTED BY SIZE OF NODES) OF THE SCHOOLS / DIVISIONS



Connections between and across groups

Alongside the role of betweenness centrality of Schools and divisions (Fig. 7), it is also important to consider which groups present stronger connections with other groups. Table 12, presents the sum of ties (including both awareness and collaborative ties – attributing highest value to the second type of ties) between the groups.

If we ignore the central oblique line (which includes the connections within the group or school), it is possible to see that a number of Schools present high levels of cross-collaborations in particular we can see that, within the USRG boundaries:

- The School of Biological Sciences, the School of Chemistry, ISVR and the School of Mathematics are mostly connected to the School of Engineering Sciences.

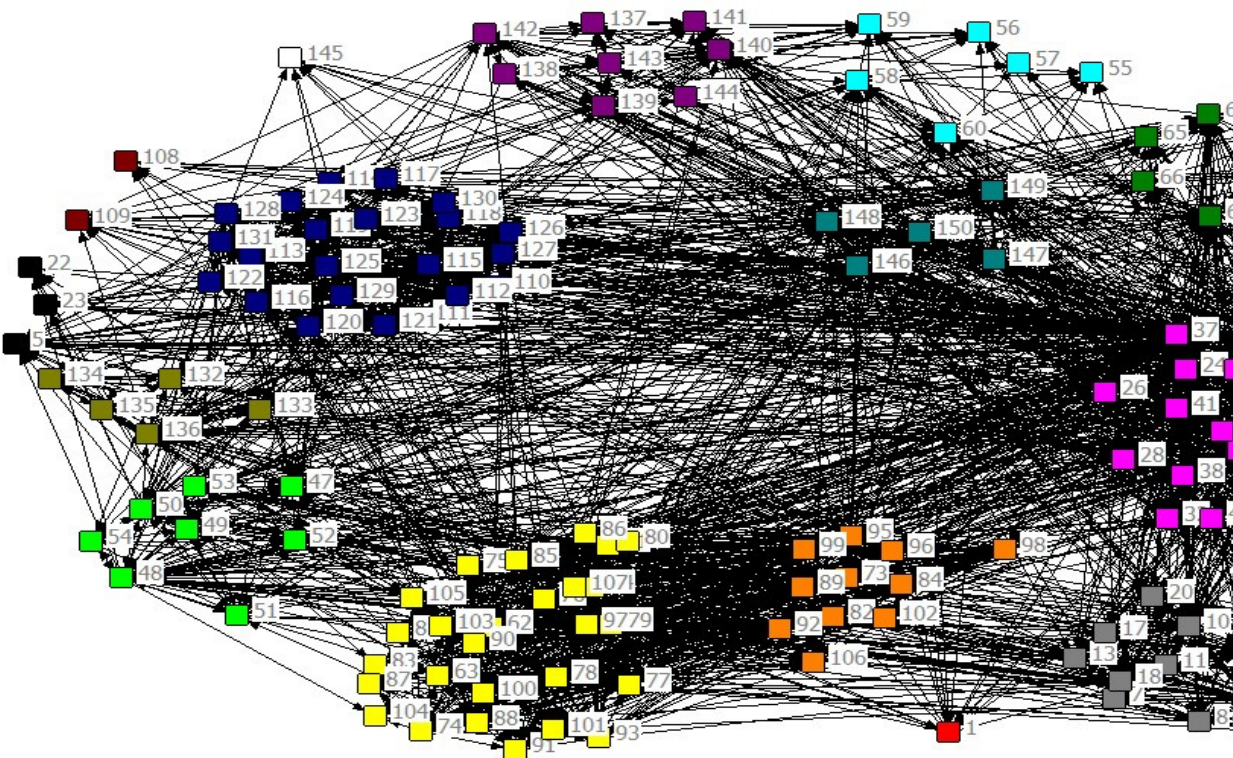
- The School of Civil Engineering and Environment has stronger connections with the School of Engineering Sciences and the NOC / School of Ocean and Earth Science.
- The School of Engineering Sciences has strong connections with many schools: The School of Civil Engineering and Environment, Research and Innovation Services, NOCS and the School of Ocean and Earth Science and the Institute of Sound and Vibration Research.
- The School of Geography has stronger connections with the School of Civil Engineering and Environment and NOCS and the School of Ocean and Earth Sciences.
- NOCS and the School of Ocean and Earth Science have strong connection with the National Marine Facilities at NOCS and with the School of Engineering Sciences and with the School of Civil Engineering and Environment
- The National Marine Facilities at NOCS has strong relations with the School of Ocean and Earth Sciences
- The School of Humanities has stronger connections with the School of Engineering Sciences and NOCS and the School of Ocean and Earth Sciences
- The School of Law has connections with the School of Humanities
- The School of Management has strong connections with the School of Engineering Sciences and with the School of Civil Engineering and Environment and also with Research and Innovation Services.
- Research and Innovation Services has strong connections with the School of Engineering Sciences and to a less extent with the School of Civil Engineering and Environment, NOCS and the School of Ocean and Earth Science and ISVR

TABLE 12: SUM OF TIES STRENGTHS WITHIN AND BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND DIVISIONS

	Bio l. Sc	Ch em	Elec t & CS	Civil Engi n & E	En gin Sc	IS V R	G eo g	M at h	NO CS /S OE S	NO CS/ N MF	W S A	H u m	L a w	Ma na g	So cia l Sc	R & I S
Biological Sciences	0	0	1	1	8	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	1
Chemistry	0	2	2	5	11	2	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Electronics and CS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Civil Eng and E	0	1	1	121	49	6	14	3	27	3	0	1	0	11	0	4
Engineering Sciences	8	17	16	114	537	87	19	36	81	48	4	473	13	57	3	90
ISVR	0	1	3	6	50	38	4	2	9	7	2	1	1	1	0	8
Geography	1	0	11	23	17	7	60	1	29	5	0	11	2	4	0	13
Mathematics	0	2	2	0	10	0	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
NOCS/SOES	2	6	7	38	54	15	29	8	338	126	3	172	13	3	1	14
NOCS/NMF	0	2	1	5	7	7	4	3	113	56	1	3	1	2	0	4
WSA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humanities	0	4	2	2	39	4	25	5	27	6	12	382	16	8	4	17
Law	0	0	1	3	9	2	1	2	9	4	1	130	20	2	0	5
Management	0	1	2	14	32	1	3	22	1	1	2	5	6	62	0	15
Social Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
R&IS	3	12	11	27	106	22	15	18	23	10	7	15	1	15	2	32

To represent the interconnections between individuals and schools we can also visualize this network (fig. 9) which highlights the density of connections across schools and divisions

FIGURE 8: AWARENESS NETWORK: INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND DIVISIONS



<div></div>	School of Biological Sciences	<div></div>	Institute of Sound and Vibration	<div></div>	School of Law
<div></div>	Research and Innovation Service	<div></div>	School of Geography	<div></div>	School of Management
<div></div>	School of Chemistry	<div></div>	School of Mathematics		
<div></div>	School of Engineering Sciences	<div></div>	NOC / School of Ocean and Earth Science		
<div></div>	School of Social Sciences	<div></div>	NOC / NMF		
<div></div>	School Civil Engineering and the Environment	<div></div>	Winchester School of Art		
<div></div>	School of Electronics and Computer Science	<div></div>	School of Humanities		
<div></div>	School of Biological Sciences	<div></div>	School of Electronics and Computer Science	<div></div>	Winchester School of Art
<div></div>	Research and Innovation Service	<div></div>	Institute of Sound and Vibration	<div></div>	School of Humanities
<div></div>	School of Chemistry	<div></div>	School of Geography	<div></div>	School of Law
<div></div>	School of Engineering Sciences	<div></div>	School of Mathematics	<div></div>	School of Management
<div></div>	School of Social Sciences	<div></div>	NOC / School of Ocean and Earth Science		
<div></div>	School Civil Engineering and the Environment	<div></div>	NOC / NMF		

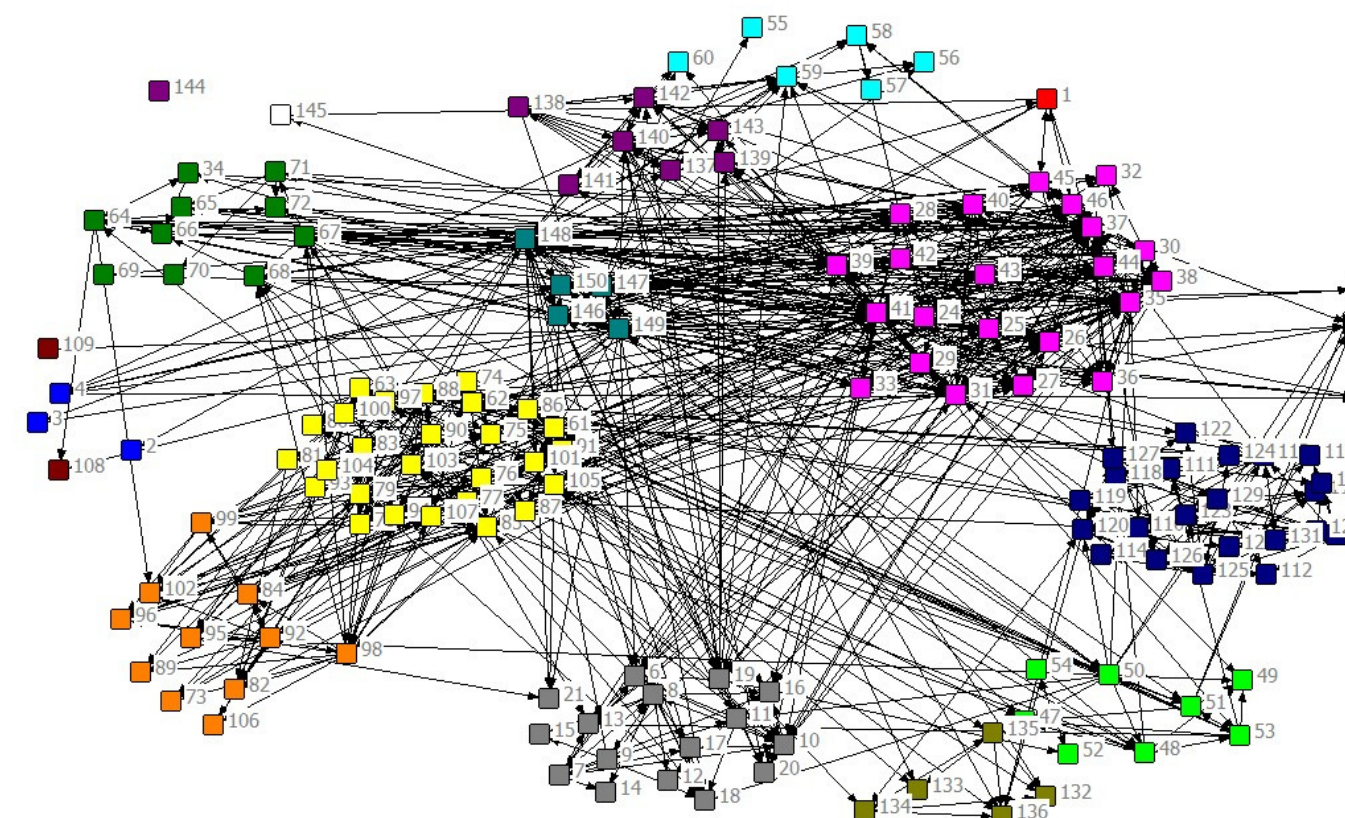


FIGURE 9: NETWORKS OF COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND DIVISIONS

Looking at the interconnections among the Schools and divisions, it is interesting to consider the E-I (external - internal) index. This takes the number of ties of group members to outsiders, subtracts the number of ties to other group members, and divides by the total number of ties. The resulting index ranges from -1 (all ties are internal to the group) to +1 (all ties are external to the group).

The outcomes of this analysis are presented below. We should ignore those Schools / groups with a tiny representation as they easily reach the index of 1 (as they do not have enough colleagues from the same school to balance internal and external ties). If we focus our attention to the more representative and comparable (in size) groups we can see that: NOC and the School of Ocean and Earth Science have an average level of interaction between inside and the outside, the School of Humanities is the more inward-looking group (with -0.271), while the School of Engineering Sciences seem to be the most outward-looking of the three larger Schools (0.156). Other smaller schools, clearly show high relative levels of interaction with the outside as only a few individuals are involved in the USRG.

TABLE 13: GROUP LEVEL E-I INDEX

School and Unit		Group level E-I Index
1	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research	0.518
2	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science	0.011
3	Research and Innovation Services	0.846
4	School of Biological Sciences	1
5	School of Chemistry	0.857
6	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment	0.243
7	School of Electronics and Computer Science	1
8	School of Engineering Sciences	0.156
9	School of Geography	0.505
10	School of Humanities	-0.276
11	School of Law	0.621
12	School of Management	0.46
13	School of Mathematics	0.792
14	School of Social Sciences	1
15	Winchester School of Art	1
21	National Marine Facilities	0.605

Preliminary conclusions from SNA questionnaire survey

The use of SNA data has enabled us to explore some of the knowledge and collaboration dynamics emerging within the USRG. These are some of the key findings emerging:

- **The network shows a great variety of connections and collaborations. While all the academics involved are somehow connected (i.e. can possibly access everyone through other people they know), it is clear that there is a strong CORE to the network, where interactions happen at higher intensity.** This is a natural property of the network, as people might only be partially interested in Maritime Studies and might be part of other networks. However, it is important to consider what can facilitate dialogue between the core and the periphery and to make sure that no individuals are excluded, (i.e. ensuring the periphery can easily access the core, or ensuring good communication throughout the network).
- Some key players emerge in the analysis, both at the level of Schools (with School of Engineering Sciences being strongly represented at the core of the network) and at the individual level (i.e. few individuals being central to most of the connections and functioning as hub for nodes to interact with the USRG). **At the individual level, we see a greater role played by professors, heads of school and heads of research group, as well as academics who have been at the University of Southampton for quite a long time.** If we want to achieve change, it may be important to consider the placement of individuals who may take or be given particular roles, implying that a change agent will find it more difficult to function at the periphery than those closer or central to the core.
- **The betweenness analysis has helped to identify two key hubs for information (and possible collaborative opportunity) to be passed on: the School of Engineering Sciences and Research and Innovation Services.** The particularly strong connection between the two also reinforces this knowledge hub. While it is inevitable that the School of Engineering Sciences has strong interconnection with most of the other science-based Schools / divisions, it seems important the Research and Innovation Services plays a more neutral role in bridging towards other non-science based Schools, in order to make sure that knowledge reaches the USRG more broadly.
- **While three main schools (Engineering Sciences, Ocean and Earth Science and Humanities) are almost equally represented in our sample of respondents, it is clear that they have different approaches to cross-disciplinary collaborations.** So far, Humanities seem to have been less outward looking, but this could also be explained by the variety of science-based activities across the University, compared with the clustering of Humanities research in one main faculty.
- **There is a broad message about communication.** If academics want to have something broadly known within the group they can choose to communicate via the key nodes. Obviously the coordinator is one of these, but there are others too and there may be reasons for choosing a particular node for a particular message.

- **From the amount of inter-disciplinary connection, we can assume that the USRG is likely to have played a role in raising awareness, across schools and divisions, of the research activities which are part of the Maritime Studies at the University of Southampton.** The difference between the awareness network and the collaboration network implies this, because while certain academics might have established collaborations, the difference between this network and the broader awareness network can probably be attributed to the USRG's role and activities. This is reflected in some of the interview responses.

Exploring the role of the Maritime Studies USRG

Alongside the internal social network analysis, a sub-sample of the respondents to the first part of the research project was asked to take part in qualitative semi-structured interviews. The analysis of these interviews is the focus of the second part of the report, but here we consider the views of interviewees on the role played by the Maritime Studies USRG in developing or supporting their networking activities.

In general, across a variety of school and career stages, there was recognition of the role that the USRG has played in raising the awareness of others' research interests across the university.

The USRG has broadened my horizon a lot, a year ago I would not know about what was going on around the University in the Marine sector, I am much more aware and having seminar lists and lists of talks (School of Civil Engineering and the Environment)

Further to the general awareness, some of the interviews saw an active role played by the USRG in helping them establish contacts and having greater opportunities

It gave me an opportunity to go beyond the world of museums, the USRG is useful for the business side of things, in humanities this is much more difficult to deal with, it is a problem area for us, but through the USRG we have a route through this and there were some events where we showcase projects and brought in a range of partners, and talk with people from the MoD and local business, I would not have been able to do this, in ship-science they probably do it everyday but not for us, we can plug into a wider range of partners (School of Humanities)

The USRG has given me the opportunity to make contacts, but also to present humanities to the rest of the University, that interface is sometimes difficult, we have lots of things going on, we are doing these things too, and that has been hugely appreciated, it has provided a vehicle where the USRG allowed us to make visits as group and talk about a range of issues and collaborations with external partners. (School of Humanities)

Our contact with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency came out at the USRG, they made direct contact with us, we had a poster presentation ... It was a good interface between industry and university (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research)

Only a few of the 20 academics interviewed were sceptical about the role of the USRG

I am quite sceptical of how useful this is (the USRG) but if there is an expectation the School and individual have to contribute, I am happy to do this (School of Law)

Many of the senior academics appreciated the potential of the USRG, but did not find it specifically useful to their internal and external networks. This was very different from younger members of staff, who saw the value of interacting with a variety of people across the university.

*The USRG has not had any effect at all for me, I can see that it makes it look like we are joined up but in reality I do not think we are ... **If I want to work with someone I go and find it myself**, but maybe it is because I have been here so long, maybe it is different for young lecturers (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*From a personal perspective the USRG has not really contributed, across the School it might be different, **it had a very successful launch event but it is unclear to me how it developed from there** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

***The USRG has made me realise how little I know about the university as a whole ...** I was staggered by how few people I know outside Humanities... internally the University needs to do more along those lines (School of Humanities)*

While many appreciated the range of activities and the links created by the USRG, many commented on the fact that it could do more or enable further connections and opportunities, especially towards external engagement.

***The maritime USRG is going to open up new opportunities, avenues where we can do cross-discipline research**, there is going to be a lot of cross over, which means that the industrial pool we can tap in is going to grow and the USRG can help bring this together (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*For the research group it gives us an opportunity to think about **bigger projects, spanning humanities and ship science** ... for example the museum has a collection of ship-plans, over 2 million, we had discussions involving ship sciences and historians (School of Humanities)*

The USRG has not helped so far in my experience but there is no reason why it could not develop to become a more useful framework around which we could develop new relationships (School of Ocean and Earth Science)

*I have not seen any direct benefit yet from the USRG but there are possibilities of that, if you have a larger pool of expertise and if we need to access a larger infrastructure ... **the more knowledge we have of other people's capabilities then the better it is, so if we get approached by someone, we know who the right person to ask** ... (School of Engineering Sciences)*

There was also a view that the aspirations and objectives of the USRG could be pushed further and the more visibility would be essential for members to the USRG to reach to new contacts and new opportunities (rather than tapping into the same links which already exists).

*The USRG is valuable ... **we need to keep raising our profile like that getting our names into the media**, however, it takes a lot of effort and time, and often people that are coming to the events are people that we have already links with. (School of Geography)*

While many academics appreciated the role of the university in creating further opportunities for external engagement, there was also the recognition that this can never be forced and that the individual academic retained the choice and ability to engage or not in these possibilities

To be honest, when it comes down to meaningful external engagements, it comes down to individual academics with individual research interests, that is the bottom line but the USRG can make opportunities for this to happen (School of Humanities)

Some of the younger members of staff suggested that the USRG could play a role in fostering and supporting younger academics in their efforts to establish external contacts.

The USRG could hold an event dedicated to the extent to which we already have established relationships outside the academic sector and a forum about how one

*develops in the maritime context these new relationships, so **people that have already been successful in establishing new relationships could share their experience with others who are thinking of doing the same thing** (School of Ocean and Earth Science)*

*In order to make the most of an individual's capabilities, the university should give guidance as to how one can maintain one's research in the public sphere, while also engaging with the private sphere ... if the University expects you to do these things, it needs to put something in place that makes that part of staff development ... Maybe working with the private sector or local community, **you might be able to shadow someone else and you can see how it works and the opportunities and benefits from both sides** (School of Humanities)*

Summary

Overall, there is a broad recognition across all career stages and schools that the USRG has helped academics to gain a greater awareness about others' research and activities. **While this is considered important for the growth of the University in the field of Maritime Studies there is some scepticism of how this could be taken forward or how we can build on this awareness to deliver better, larger and cross-disciplinary research projects.** The USRG seems to need a stronger 'political' profile, to take further actions and initiatives, especially in reference to raising the overall profile of the university and acting as broker for external engagement. **While senior members of staff recognise that this could add value to their work, they also feel confident that they can develop contacts and projects based on their own knowledge of the university expertise. On the other hand,** younger members of staff see in the USRG a possible vehicle to acquire more expertise, interact with experienced academics and engage more professionally with outside partners.

Findings – Part II: External Engagement

Sectors and external engagement

During the interviews, academics provided a range of examples of external contacts. This can give us an overview, although from a limited sample of 21 academics, of the range of sectors and interconnections experienced.

Fig. 10 and Table 14 provide an overview of the academics interviewed (identified only by their School of origin) and their contacts (with the sector they belong to). As we can see, some academics mentioned up to 11 contacts (I asked for a sample of 10) but few of them had fewer external (non-academic) partners; and one of the interviewees did not have any involvement with external organisations (apart from other universities). Overall, it is interesting to notice that each academic tends to work with a range of organisations, although some have strong private sector collaborations (such as number 2 or number 14) or not for profit partners (such as number 9), in most cases we can highlight that academics tend to work across sectors, engaging with private, public and not for profit organisations according to their research interests and topics.

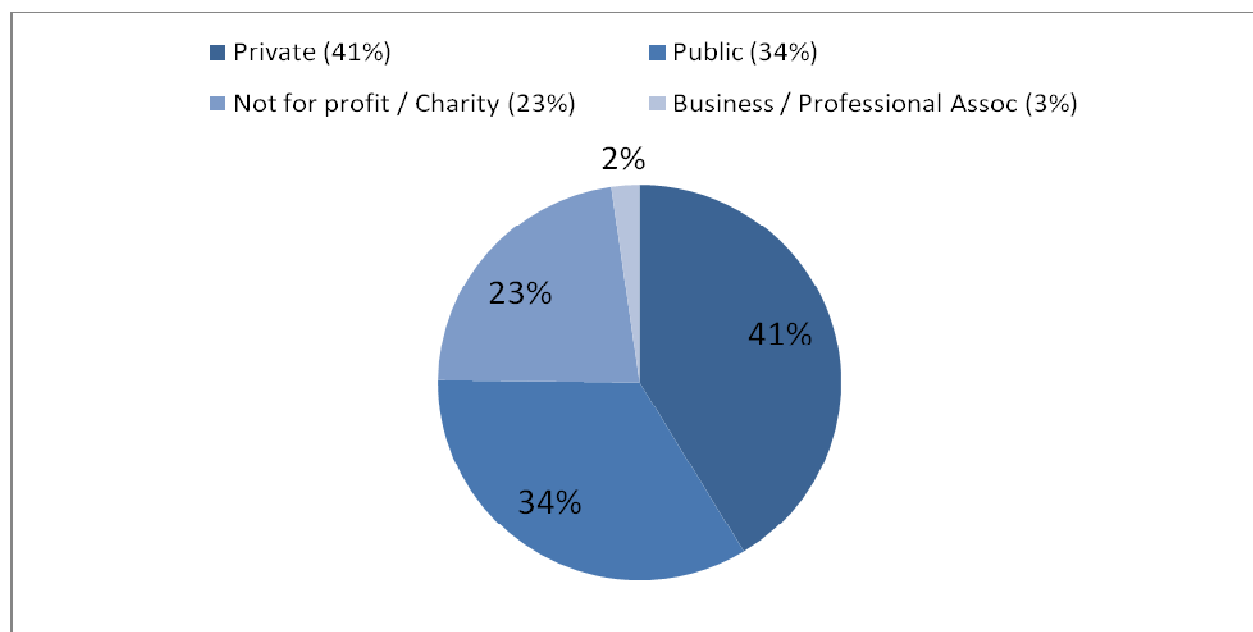
TABLE 14: ACADEMICS AND THEIR EXTERNAL CONTACTS

School / Division	Sector				Total
	Private	Public Sector	Charity / Not for Profit	Business Association	
1) School of Engineering Sciences	4	2	1	2	9
2) School of Engineering Sciences	9	0	1	0	10
3) School of Law	1	0	0	0	1
4) NOC / School of Earth and Ocean Science	4	1	3	0	8
5) School of Geography	3	1	1	0	5
6) School of Engineering Sciences	0	0	0	0	0
7) School of Civil Engineering and the Environment	1	2	1	0	4
8) School of Humanities	0	3	0	0	3
9) School of Humanities	0	0	8	0	8
10) School of Humanities	0	4	2	0	6
11) School of Management	0	5	1	1	7
12) NOC / School of Earth and Ocean Science	2	2	2	0	6
13) School of Geography	2	6	2	0	10
14) School of Engineering Sciences	8	0	3	0	11
15) School of Engineering Sciences	1	0	0	0	1
16) ISVR	1	3	1	0	5
17) School of Chemistry	8	0	0	0	8
18) NOC / School of Earth and Ocean Science	4	6	1	0	11
19) NOC / School of Earth and Ocean Science	6	3	0	0	9
20) School of Humanities	1	2	1	0	4
21) NOC / School of Earth and	0	5	2	0	7

Ocean Science					
Total	55	45	30	3	133

Overall, as shown in Fig. 10, private companies make up 41% of the external contacts, the public sector represent 34% of the external partners and the not for profit sector 23%, while business and professional associations represent just 3%.

FIGURE 10: SECTOR OF EXTERNAL PARTNERS



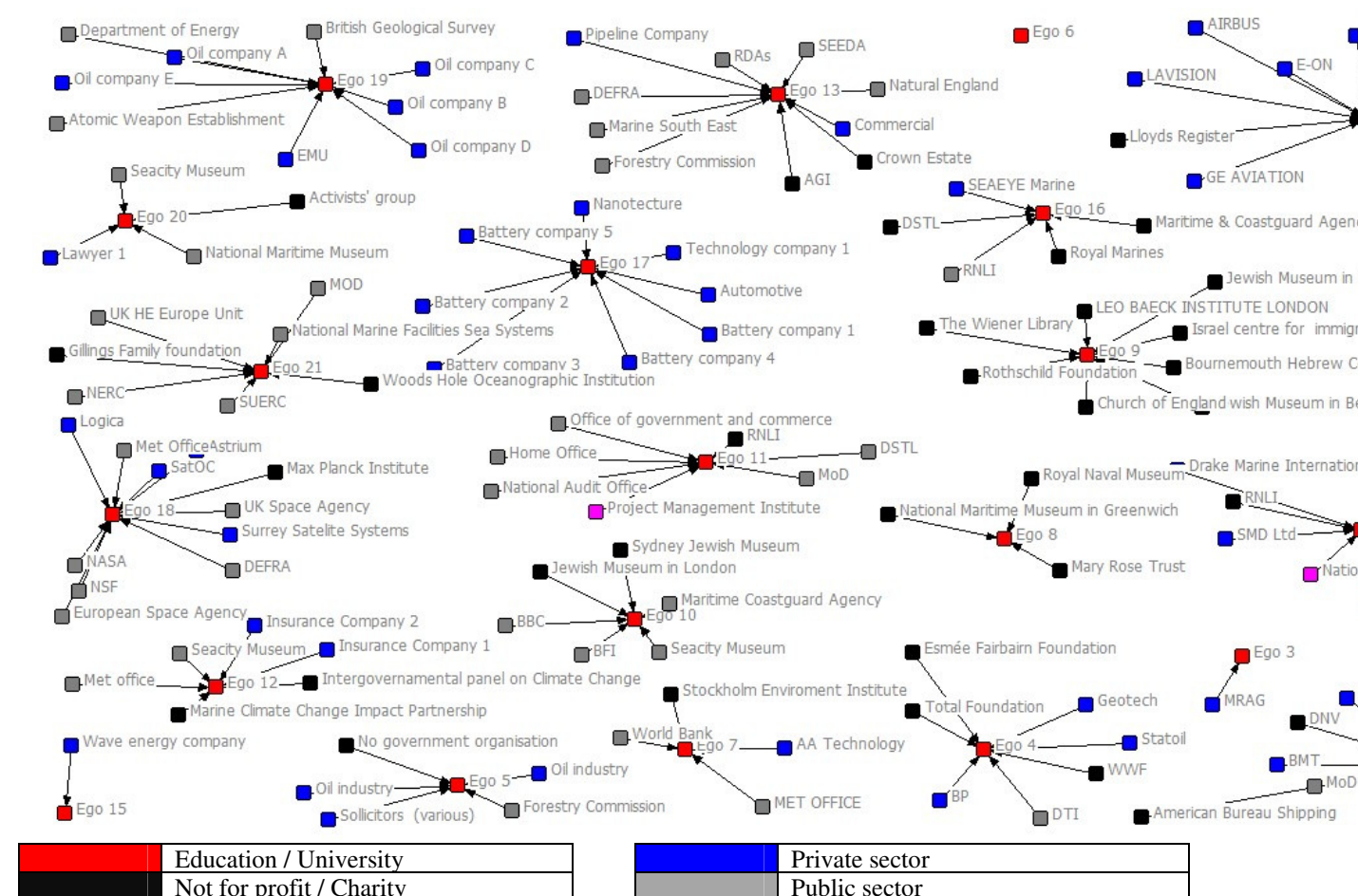
Different academics, specifically in relation to their research, identify different sectors and organisations as their relevant external partners. There is no judgement as to whether a public sector organisation is “better” to work with than a not for profit organisation. In relation to the specific field of the partner organisation, different advantages and disadvantages can be identified, so it is not always the case that the private sector is better or worse to work with.

Money is a big barrier at the moment, particular for small companies, they would love to throw some money at the project but they cannot do it at the moment (School of Engineering Sciences)

There are interesting opportunities here, it means we can tap into funding streams that we would not ordinarily be able to and vice versa, because they are a registered charity, and give us some flexibility (School of Humanities)

Figure 11 helps us visualise the range of contacts and external partners that the interviewee engages with. In particular, thanks to the colours which identify the sectors of the external partners, (education, public, private or not for profit) it is possible to see how certain individuals tend to interact with specific sectors (for example almost all the contacts of Ego 2 are private companies). However, in most case, the nodes (representing the academics interviewed) present a range of collaborations, including not-for-profit sector, public organisations etc. The only nodes belonging to the education/University sector (in red) are the individuals interviewed, as during the interviews they were asked to specified external contacts but outside the academic sphere.

FIGURE 11: EGONETWORKS AND THEY CONNECTIONS BY SECTOR



Geography of external engagement

The geographical dimension of these collaborations is also interesting (see fig. 13). Overall, 40% of the connections are local (the South of England) but this large percentage obviously includes London and other cities in the South, which being within easy reach, are well represented. As these respondents suggest the one-day commute distance does facilitate interactions.

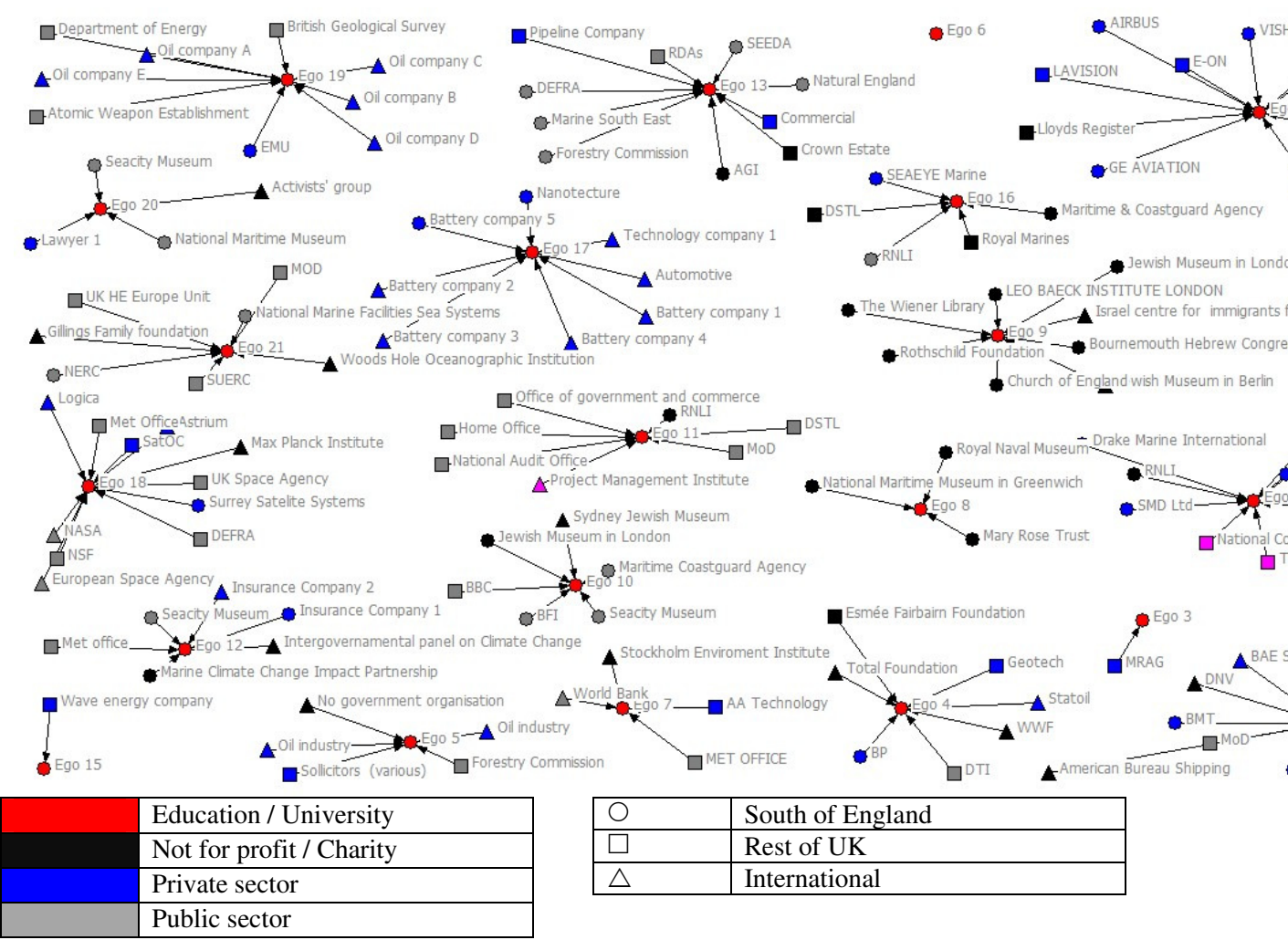
*What is really helpful in generating collaboration is being close to people, but at the end of the day if they want to work with you, **it does not matter where you are, but collaborations we had close by worked very well, within a one-day commute ... that is a big barrier to more collaboration internationally, you cannot go anywhere further than Brussels in one day** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*Some of them are local but geography is not the primary determinant, **it is more about who the right partners are, and geography is becoming less of an issue with electronic communication, it is a geography of relation rather than a geography of space** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

However, overall, respondents underlined the importance of working with key players in their area of expertise and research and therefore distance was not considered important. Also in relation to the different context and scale of one's research, global issues or dynamics might in fact be more relevant than local ones. In general it was felt that Southampton did not provide specific resources (such as Regional funding) to tap into.

***Southampton and the South East do not get enough funding to do anything meaningful, compared to the North of England and Scotland, so we work with some local companies but no big funding organisations** (School of Chemistry)*

FIGURE 12: EGONETWORKS AND THEIR CONNECTIONS BY SECTOR AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION



Some of the academics and Schools have local collaborations, but they are not a major part of their work.

Personally the relation with Southampton is not strong, I work more with the USA, but as a school, our school board is chaired by the Head of the City Council, so as a school we try to foster relationships with local businesses, we have 11 senior managers on our school board, some maritime like Carnival (School of Management)

There is quite a lot of activity within the South East and the Hampshire region, maybe 30% of our contracts, but the rest of our work is in the rest of UK and internationally as well (School of Engineering Sciences)

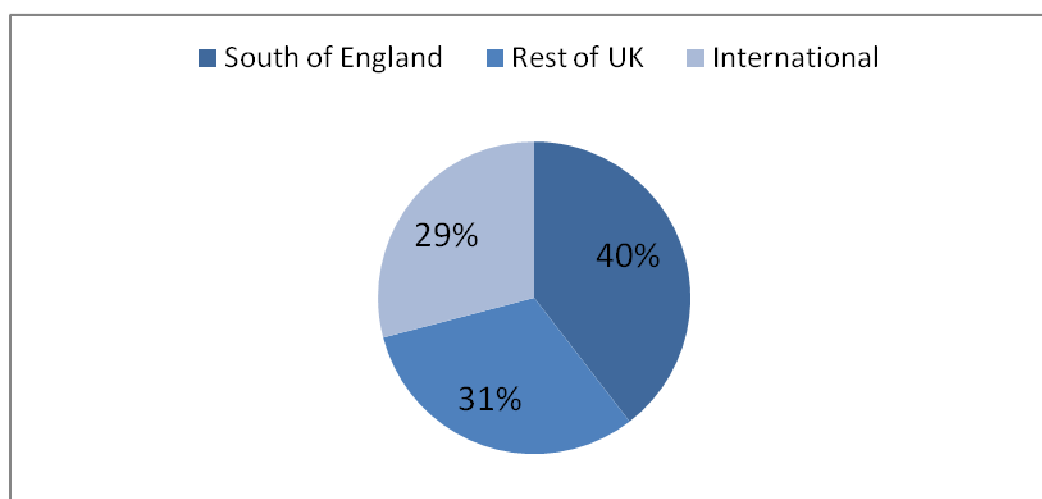
The role of Southampton (or the Hampshire area) was not considered particularly important for the respondents, although there was a feeling that it could have improved or was something worth considering further.

They tend to have offices in the Southern Region but it does not mean it would be my main point of contact, it can be wherever, I do not think Southampton makes such a difference, although we work with local companies, our business is international (School of Engineering Sciences)

Contacts with Southampton is something we need to work on and links with local communities, we have strong national and international links, but the local is something we do not pay much attention to (School of Humanities)

I like talking to general audiences, I am motivated to try and improve the visibility of our research, especially in Southampton, I do not think enough people in the city are aware of or sufficiently proud of this university, and we can do a better job in establishing our presence in public (School of Ocean and Earth Science)

FIGURE 13: THE GEOGRAPHY OF CONNECTIONS

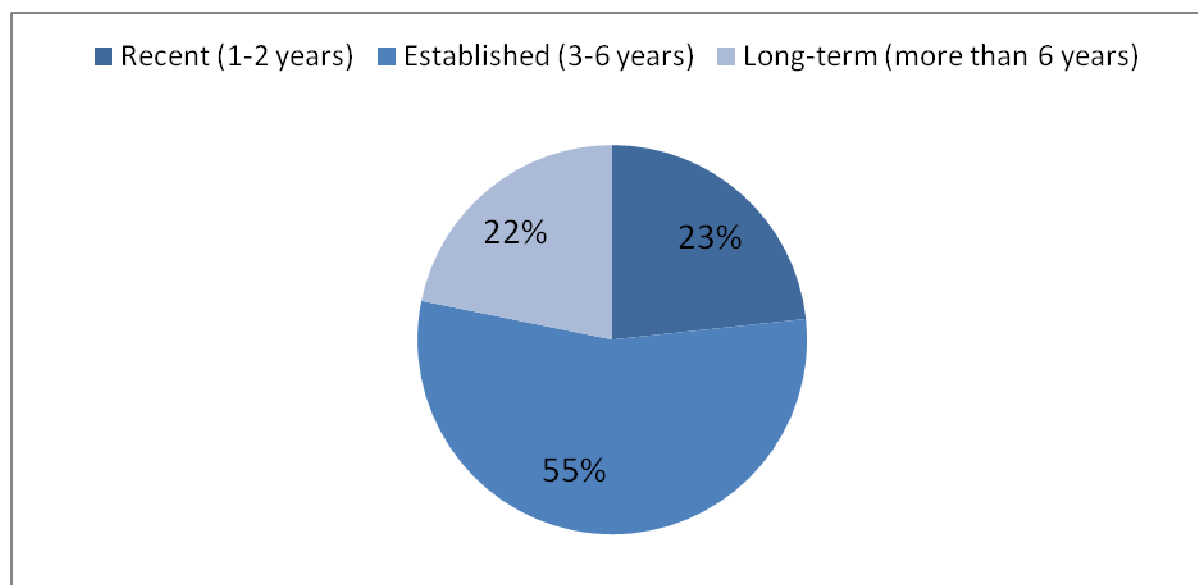


Time and strength of the relationships

The responses show an interesting variety and mix, particularly when we consider the stage that the relationships are at with external partners. The majority of the relationships had been

established for three to six years, but most of the respondents, alongside established and long-term relationships, were cultivating new contacts (see fig. 14).

FIGURE 14: WHEN WAS THE RELATIONSHIP ESTABLISHED?



In fact most of the respondents considered their contacts to be long-term contacts and even if recent, they considered them starting points of new long-term partners. There was very little evidence of using contacts for one-off projects or partnerships.

Once we get a client, we tend to work with them for a very long time; generally our relationship does not end, it might lie dormant for a few years, but we might get a phone call out of the blue and immediately pick up where we left off (School of Geography)

While some people highlighted that a social dimension creates advantages in trust and exchanges with external partners, the social side is very ‘personal’, depending on personal affinity. It is not a prerogative, and in fact an added social dynamic is present in only 24% of the relationships.

If it becomes a social relationship, it becomes a lot easier, and you move further into that trust relationship. Some of the project management circles are quite social relationships, particularly with government types of people, particularly when you attend conferences you start to know people (School of Management)

Many of my contacts are built **from former students because naval architecture is a very small discipline** (School of Engineering Sciences)

I get more out of the organisation because I like the people there; **we have a professional and personal relation and the two balance each other very nicely.** You gain more from a relationship with an individual that is a personal one as well as a professional one (School of Humanities)

Whether the relation is also social, I do not think it depends on the organisation but the individual ... probably with policy makers I do not see them often enough to establish social relations ... **if you do have a social relation then it makes it easier to interact on any level, you know people better** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)

Although a social dimension is not always present, there was a strong personal connection and an element of serendipity in the kind of relations that were established.

The Max Planck Institute relationships was **an accident of history**, because a German guy that was working here moved to the institute **so we might not have developed a relationship with them, but it is because this person was heavily involved** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)

It is like serendipity, I had a colleague and friend in Australia and told her I was coming to the end of a large project and mentioned I wanted to work on a large river... she had a friend in this non-government commission and they contacted me so that came by personal recommendation (School of Geography)

A lot of these relations come by **word of mouth**, these people came and asked about submarines and this a new relationship, I just met this guy a month ago, but that's because he was sitting on a desk opposite a person I was working with twenty years ago, **so in a sense it is a new relation but it is also a twenty-year old relationship** (School of Management)

Sometimes this is also informed by the career patterns of the academics involved, for example if they have had experience in industry

I came from an engineering consultancy, which was a naval consultancy, so all my contacts are naval contacts, some of them are to do with logistics and project management (School of Management)

The centre has 28 companies on its books, people who are funding work, **that's driven by the vision of the academic involved, who was our previous director, it would be difficult to see something of that scale come off if he had not been involved in this enterprise** - consultancy sort of activities, having companies, coming in and doing a variety of different work (School of Engineering Sciences)

In more than one case, this personal dimension allows academics to become ‘brokers’ of relations even outside their specific field of research

I have contacts with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and **I have put them in contact with the Sea City project** and hopefully they will be involved in that as well (School of Humanities)

*The Sea City Museum in Southampton ... **I have introduced them to a travel writer, who will do some of their narratives ... this is more as a facilitator than a direct research interest** (School of Humanities)*

Modes of engagement

From the interviews it was clear that when talking about 'external engagement' it was not possible to have a single definition or single understanding and in fact all of the School and academics are aware that their external engagement develops via a variety of activities, contacts and modes of interactions

*There are all sorts of different ways, there is consultancy, using them as research partners, PhD students, MSc projects in the summer, knowledge transfer partnership ... **these are all different ways of collaborating, we have the whole spectrum of ways of collaborating** (School of Management)*

*We tend to work with everybody, large projects provide more contingency ... **but we work with the full range, because you never know where things would lead, often we have helped someone almost as an individual, and you do not realise that they work in a large organisation** and that leads to something much bigger, we try to help always everyone and that really pays off (School of Geography)*

***We work with companies, from people who have a handful of employees to multinational companies, from a couple of days work, to the largest contract of £250k run over a three-year period, the whole range** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*We adapt to the financial model and infrastructure of each organisation, **we tend to be very flexible, and react to how each organisation type likes to work**, some organisations are very formal, others we are able to work with and roughly tell them how much it costs, with some others we have some service agreement sort of format (School of Geography)*

The multiple nature of these relations depends also on the role of the academics involved

*I have a number of roles, so the organisations with which I work under each role are different, I run the NERC Rapid Climate Change Program, I have my own personal research interests and I am co-chair of a research group, **so I get in contact with people for different reasons** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

*My interests are experimental mechanics and structural testing and I work with academics and I have had EPSRC grants, **so I cover some fundamental research aspects but my main activity is the applied research and consultancy** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

The modes seems to be also linked to the kind of subject and research academics are involved in, but not in a predetermined way

*At the School and Faculty level, we have to work together with industry, **it is engineering as a whole, needs to offer solution to a problem, we can say 'I have this solution technique, I am looking for a problem** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*Often is only an exchange, but there are instances when they really need you because you are the expert and **they commission you to write a concept for an exhibition, in that case it can be paid work, but you won't get rich** (School of Humanities)*

*The reasons for collaborating depend on where you are in the spectrum, so if it is an MSc is just getting a contact, consulting may be about getting money ... **you cannot do business school research within the Business School, to do research you need to be out there, it is like our laboratory, the business world is our lab, we have to be out there**, even if it is a bit of consultancy which is not very interesting, as long as it helps to introduce us to interesting research data or an interesting problem, it gives a*

creative interest... the school is research-led and research is at the heart of the school (School of Management)

Benefits of collaborating with external partners

Most of the respondents struggle to capture the single nature of their relationship with the external partner as in the majority of the cases, the relationships was a sum of different types of activities and exchanges (table 15).

In general terms, mostly people identified three main types of connections: a knowledge transfer / funding relations (often linked to a research project), a consultancy relation (more directed to provide a service to the external partner) and more general knowledge sharing / collaborative relation (often not linked to a specific contract but more to an exchange).

*With the MET office it is a partnership, we work with them in climate change, so they are putting their own resources into that, **so there is no exchange of funds, it is a collaboration** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

However, while these three categories provided a main framework for the relation, every relation had multiple benefits and dimensions, mostly including relations with teaching and student projects / placements, funding towards research students, small consultancy tasks or access to materials / data /equipment of the external partners.

TABLE 15: LIST OF BENEFITS MENTIONED

	Benefit 1	Benefit 2	Benefit 3
KT / Funding	49	3	2
Consultancy	22	18	4
Knowledge sharing / collaboration	36	10	8
Access to funding	13	3	1
PhD / Research student	4	12	7
Personal relationship	1	0	0
Influence Public policy	1	7	4
Co-founder / spin out	1	0	0
Materials / Archives / Data	2	21	5
Teaching / Student placements	1	22	9
Visiting academics / teaching companies	1	2	2
Networking	1	3	2
Access to technology / equipment	1	5	4
	133	106	48

This multiple nature of the relationships established was underlined by many interviewees.

***It is only a consultancy but we have plans to talk about maybe supporting UG student projects, they are also involved in the business advisory board for one of our EPSRC contracts and this is because of the consultancy relationships** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*We have lots of alumni in the carbon industry and mining industry and we try to bring their expertise **into our education programme as visiting lectures and they do fund certain aspects of our education programme and they hire our graduates ...** sometimes they contribute with datasets to our Master programmes (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

Many respondents did see their external engagement activities closely linked with their teaching practice and benefiting the experience offered to students

*It is officially a consultancy relationship ... but as a visiting academic he also talks to our students so he provides industrial insights in some aspects of the structures of submarines ... **this educational provision of knowledge to our students is quite unique*** (School of Engineering Sciences)

*The benefits are varied ... giving a public lecture sometimes ... what is interesting is the kind of questions you get asked ... **it makes you question the assumptions that you are making** ... and that's very good for teaching* (School of Humanities)

*For UG teaching I feed pictures and **examples from my consultancy into my lectures so the students can see a practical link with the work you are doing**, it is important for their perception of you as individual and their own perception of what they might do as a career, you are not just an academic interested in rivers you are helping society by managing rivers, and they think 'I could go into river consultancy'* (School of Geography)

***For our students we have an opportunity through these links**, so they can also speak to museum staff* (School of Humanities)

*There is a feed through to Masters teaching, **when I lecture on things like observation, telling my students about the latest techniques, telling them about things that are coming out from our meeting ESA, NASA and also development project with companies**, where we look at the users and they implement the technologies and applications* (School of Earth and Ocean Science)

Many of the respondents saw collaboration with external partners as essential to their work and strongly recognised the value and expertise of those external partners

*The relationship is two way because we do not have ships, and we want information about ships, we need research and operational information for our research, it has to be, **they bring valuable knowledge*** (School of Engineering Sciences)

*We see it as co-production of knowledge, so things we could not do on our own ... the people we like to talk to are 'reflective practitioners' who do the job and think about it... we join up with them and we can do something together, **so it is co-production of knowledge, a lot of things we do, we could not do on our own, industry could not do on their own but you put us together and we can*** (School of Management)

In particular, external engagement was a driver for motivation and many respondents were doing it mainly because it was something interesting and challenging in relation to their research.

*And in terms of the museum it helps publish our work, to make it known to the public – for an historian you sit in an archive, you deal with sources and then you write it up but to have the possibility to show it in an exhibition and show it with pieces of artefacts, **it is much more attractive than just an article in a journal*** (School of Humanities)

The engagement with external partners also enables people to test the relevance and value of their work in the real world

***Businesses put a value on what that knowledge is**, they have a role in helping us define the kind of impact of our research work* (School of Engineering Sciences)

*I find the advisory boards in big projects very useful, **they will keep your feet anchored to the ground** ... asking simple practical questions 'how can you use it on this boat', simple practical problems, to actually make a difference to these people* (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research)

Funding

Funding is considered a major driver of external engagement, sometimes industry seems to be the only viable partner in supporting a specific kind of research. There was also a push towards a diversification of funding sources, driven by the economic climate and policy change, where external engagement seemed to become more important

Engaging with external organisations is going to become more important in the future than it was in the past, it is clear that funding from government is going to decline, and our efforts needs to be directed elsewhere and we might have to change our behaviour in order to achieve that (School of Earth and Ocean Science)

*Motivation is usually doing something interesting and wanting to work with someone, but we also have **funding drivers as we have staff and want to pay their salary and keep them working**, so the primary driver is interesting science, the second is to bring in money (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

***Funding is a major motivation** but it helps also me and my colleagues to appreciate the employment sectors that our graduates will hopefully enter (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

*Our activity is not just about income generation, it is support of research activities, **we might be able to see a business case and make a lot of money, but if it is not tied in with the research and education, it has only got a short-term life** and no long-term benefit (School of Engineering Sciences)*

Responding to the impact agenda

Another important dimension, considered key both by academics in science and humanities is the new importance of external engagement to support grant applications to research councils. The importance of showing 'impact' makes these external relations very important towards receiving large grants.

*For the AHRC everything you do needs to have an impact, **an impact means a bit more than turning the wheel of academia, impact can be understood as reaching out, reaching different people that you do not reach with academic work** (School of Humanities)*

*Each time I have to write a proposal, I need to write an impact plan, and I am happy to write in it a similar kind of venture, that we could develop through a long-term collaboration with the Sea City museum ... **there is a long-term opportunity to rotate exhibits at the museum to show off our research** (School of Ocean and Earth Science)*

*The scientific knowledge is one way, from us to them, but the industrial knowledge is the other way. They tell us what is required and if what we are doing is relevant to what they need, **they offer to work with our discoveries, so showing the sponsors (like the EC) that what we are doing is worthwhile** (School of Chemistry)*

And even for academic who does not engage with companies, this is recognised as an obstacle for them to try and access funding.

My work is kind of theoretical so it is not easy to work with companies ... of course it is important especially for EPSRC proposals that usually ask for industrial support and that's a problem for me (School of Engineering Sciences)

*Engagement is going to become more important for the university, with Engineering and Sciences there is not a massive amount of blue sky research done, lots of the fundamental research is kind of applied, offering solutions to real life problems so there is always going to be a fair amount of industrial engagement, they will know of companies that lead in the technologies they are interested in, **but it is more important in demonstrating the impact of research, because companies using knowledge that is generated in the university is the best example of that** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

The impact agenda is closely intertwined with the need to reach out to different audiences, whether in the community, the economy or in public policy

*The relationship with the Sea City museum is a small partnership but if that works out well, I am interested in exploring **how I can increase the presence of my research in the local community** ... we will provide display materials and develop them in partnership (School of Ocean and Earth Science)*

*By having contact with these kinds of people, it enables us to tap into what it is that industry really want, making sure the research we do is industrially relevant, if you do too much research which is too much blue sky or behind closed doors you can do research activities for nothing, **the outputs of the research can be valuable to the UK economy in the future** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*Outreach is very important for us [...] it is important for us to inform the public of what we are doing, because it is more than academic, **it has a societal and political dimension to influence public policy** (School of Humanities)*

*There is a sense of pride working with public sector organisations, we do things in a very standard-compliance, value for money, very cost-effective manner, **so it gives us a feel good factor to know that you are delivering those philosophies within a public sector** (School of Geography)*

The personal motivation behind external engagement

Although many academics described a variety of benefits to engage with external partners, there were quite a few motivations which were personal and linked to career dynamics and the future of the respondents, and this was particularly true in the case of younger members of staff

*The things I do, I do them because I want to do them, they are part of my job, but it is not motivated by someone else, is not that my ambition leads me to do things I do just for doing them, there needs to be a personal interest in it for me ... **it is personal motivation, it has a long-term career goal ... but it needs to all connect, it needs to have a personal motivation** beyond simply the sake of 'I am doing this because it is my job' (School of Humanities)*

*The motivation for engaging is **writing better research papers and improving my teaching** ... a research paper I published recently was very much informed by the discussion I was having with lawyers working on a case (school of Humanities)*

Sometimes this engagement is seen in strategic terms, for the career development and opportunity of the academic, or to remain in a current post.

*From a selfish point of view, having this network of people that I built up over the years allows me to continue the relationship in the hope we do good research with them and **they will support bids for research council money or government money or from elsewhere to further my career** ... some of the contacts are my own, that I fostered on my own, they are important to me, **they will help me secure my future ability to get industrial support for my research council funding** (School of Engineering Sciences)*

*It is a worthwhile institute to get close to, the materials they want to archive ... my aim is to nurture the relationship so that I have a PhD student working there at some point in the future ... **I am thinking long-term, thinking how it would help to construct a relationship that would help me and my colleagues ... I am early-career so I am doing this in small steps.*** (School of Humanities)

*It is impossible these days to have an academic career without linking with industry, in the latest review of the department, **if it was not for my industrial collaborations and the support I was getting from that network, I would have been made redundant** ... if you do not get money in, you get fired... It has made me focus much more on developments that bring money in and into leaving anything else* (School of Chemistry)

The importance of networking

Many respondents highlighted the importance of networking or keeping informed and be part of activities that can provide further opportunities.

*They organise meeting of people who have like-minded ideas on how to drive research forward ... **They are the conduit through which we make further industrial contact** ... they organise seminars and workshops to aid those relationships* (School of Engineering Sciences)

*I try and act, I'd rather be involved and find out that is not really my thing, rather than not being involved and wish I had done that, **networking is also valuable*** (School of Humanities)

Establishing new contacts seems to be a very time consuming investment.

*I went to a 'Christmas Seminar' that led to a visit last summer, we managed to progress a relationship with them and talk also to another insurance company about ways in which our research can improve our ability to predict hurricanes, **in both cases I have been quite pro-active, it took so far a year and half to get to this point and we are optimistic that sometimes in the future they would invest in our research*** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)

However, many also highlighted the demanding tasks of keeping up with their network and contacts and the importance of maintaining the networks and connections alive.

***Most of these people I see once a month**, through project meetings, or meeting somewhere for other issues we are involved in together* (School of Engineering Sciences)

*I try to provide an excellent service so they will come back to me. **I try to maintain contact with the same people and every few months send an e-mail** saying "is there anything I can do for you"- "would you like to discuss a studentship", every year I contact them to make sure they remember me even if I am sure they might not have any money* (School of Geography)

*The problem is we are fairly static here, with fairly permanent positions, we look at things long-term there they get promoted or move sideways, you call after six months you are not talking to the guy you built the relationship **with so that's why we went down there ... you need to be building up the relationship all the time so you have a gateway to the company*** (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research) *Funding is diverse, so you need a lot of relationships with different people for different reason, **sustaining them is a time issue and a problem sometimes*** (School of Ocean and Earth Science)

Time is often considered a barrier here and also maintaining stable contacts in very volatile working environments and project-based work is difficult.

*Main barrier is time, if you have been working with someone a long time and you need to write a bid it is straight forward, **but if you have not worked with anyone before, it takes time to build a relationship** (School of Ocean and Earth Science)
We have a weak link with DEFRA, because the person involved kept changing every 6 months, so over 3 years we have 4-5 different people, **we never established a very good relationship but we worked hard on that, I seconded one of my staff to spend time, not long, there to get to know people and find out what they wanted, what kind of information they as policy-makers find useful** (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

Developing CPD

Continuing Professional Development was not very high in the agenda of external engagement. It often felt like it could be an opportunity for some disciplines, but was not fully explored for a variety of reasons, including time and commitments.

*Long-term we see this as opportunity for UG but we are starting to see the research side of it, we would like to work closer with the Museum at the level of MA modules. They could provide input to a new MA programme but these are difficult things to negotiate; we are thinking of developing more opportunities so that we can deliver ourselves courses in maritime study, which would increase our research-base. **It is again about timeframes, we need to be mindful about the fact that it might take some time** (School of Humanities)*

*CPD ... we have very little, although we are trying to develop it, I am not sure if it is because ... we are just not good at marketing or the way you package it ... we have changed now the way we deliver PG courses, so you can just take one module for one week, which becomes a one-week short course... **we have the knowledge, we are just not good in showing we have that knowledge** ... we are trying to spread the message and have evening seminars (School of Management)*

During the interviews successful examples have been mentioned of integration between CPD and external engagement, but the impression was that the university struggles to provide relevant opportunities and materials for specialised markets.

*In the 80s we ran courses and we would get engineers from oil companies and they were successful; we run short courses, now we occasionally have people coming, but **it is not very common and there is not a very big market to tap into**. What we are teaching is too broad ... they are not tailored to specific markets, if you have a government regulation that the company needs to meet, then you can do that, but otherwise it is too generic (School of Earth and Ocean Science)*

*The Summer School is a form of CPD, run by the Electro-chemistry section, seven or eight academics, we run the course in a week and we receive about 30 people from industry who pay around one thousand pounds each, **it has been going on for 30 years and it generates further industrial contacts** (School of Chemistry)*

Barriers

Some infrastructural difficulties were mentioned, specifically in the way financial and legal issues are addressed within the university.

*Within the university there is a **lot of rigidity and inflexibility in the way the university runs, that sometimes make doing enterprise activities very difficult** and that's a serious problem for the university to deliver on that agenda, for example the way finance operates ... like having to close all accounts at the end of the year (School of Geography)*

It is difficult to set up contracts within the university, getting stuff through legal issues, they got lots better ... if you go to a consultancy company and you want a job done, they can snap their fingers, and have three consultants there that day working for three months, we cannot always do this, if you come and ask us for a consultancy in May we need to say, it is exam time you have to wait (School of Management)

On the other hand, some mentioned that the university provides an open approach to engagement, not forcing or constraining activities.

There are benefits from being at the university, we are seen to be independent, we can charge what we like, we can charge a small sum, if we think it is something very interesting, we do consulting for fees that consultancy would not want to do, because we might get a good paper out of it (School of Management)

I never let the way the university operates stop me from doing anything, it is irrelevant how we get money or making our contacts, the university is neutral in many ways, neither a help or a hindrance...gives academics a great deal of freedom ... which I think helps as you would not want the university to facilitate that, it is up to the individual, is not for the university to say you must meet so and so, it is up to the individual (School of Engineering Sciences)

Overall, interviewees find it difficult to identify specific barriers to engagement.

I do not see any barrier, we get good support from Research and Innovation Services in dealing with specific issues ... there is always been a solution, I cannot think of any project that has not happened because we could not agree on T&Cs (School of Engineering Sciences)

There are no real barriers from the outside, our involvement with external organisations is always welcomed and very positive, never had a negative reaction to the fact that we come from the university (School of Geography)

Time was seen as the major issue preventing more engagement taking place.

Principal barrier is time, time constraints can be severe, especially in the teaching year but apart from that there are no specific barriers to developing relationships and becoming more networked in the community (School of Earth and Ocean Science)

The main barrier is time, but as a School we have not been able to do too much and we do not have a champion of it, finding the human resources is the challenge, we have many contacts with industry but we have not got ourselves together to be more coherent in our approach with industry (School of Earth and Ocean Science)

Another issue mentioned was the financial pressure and difficulties created by the recession.

It is difficult for industry when there is a recession to be putting resources into an academic project, that may make collaboration for some companies difficult – not the long established – but starting up and relationship building is a long-term commitment and in the recession it might seem very difficult to start new projects (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research)

Another important issue mentioned, that complicates the relations between academia and industry is the different timescales that they adopt.

We are not really oriented towards business ... the fundamental difference between university and industry is that they are in research “and development” but we are in research, the university has been pushing on spin-out, there are going to be very few areas where we can develop spin out ... but I still feel we’ve got a totally different horizon than industry, they want solutions now, we want problems that take three – six years to try and find an answer (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research)

After the formal link, we had a series of meetings but now it is more informal contacts, but you have to keep maintaining the contact ... you have to keep ringing them to say, “I am still here, I am going to be down soon”, it is all from our side ... you have to

*keep in touch, we need data, they need solutions, but also we need access to them, we work very hard to keep these links going, is not a easy thing to do ... **things like an approval from Safety & Ethics might take four months, if you are out there in industry, you have not concept of why a procedure like that might take so long ... sometimes it is difficult for industry to understand how the university operates, and why a procedure like that should take so long** (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research)*

Some academics felt that there are no real barriers but that sometimes perception can play a role against academia.

*People have a totally wrong view of academics sometimes, with no industrial experience ... we need to get the message that we are active as well, we work in the real world ... **they think we teach students all the time ...they do not know that the main part of my work is about research** ... we do not tell people enough about it (Institute of Sound and Vibration Research)*

*To some industries they still sees us as the next stage after school, they have not quite realised we are a research institute, but **once you have broken that misconception down and they see the facilities and the knowledge we have and when we can demonstrate some of our research output they are very willing to collaborate**, but you have to break that misconception down (School of Engineering Science)*

Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis of qualitative interviews and social network analysis data has provided many insights into internal collaborations and external engagement in the Maritime Studies USRG at the University of Southampton. It is important to consider how these findings help us not only to describe processes and experiences but also to inform future activities and indicate how these can be supported and developed further. In the following paragraphs, we explore the main findings of the research and link these to possible actions and recommendations, however, some issues raised here might benefit from further research and consultation. In particular, bearing in mind the original aims of this report, we want to highlight the findings relevant to the three key questions below.

1. How can the institution best coordinate, support and maximise the benefit from our engagement with employers?

The findings from our qualitative interviews suggest that external engagement is strongly linked to personal and career motivations; the academics interviewed showed a strong level of engagement with external partners. Whether working with industry, or influencing public policy, or engaging different audiences, making an impact in the real world and the challenges that this presents, is seen as the main reason for engaging. Lack of motivation does not seem an issue and the University helps to channel and support that motivation. The academics highlighted a variety of different benefits to themselves and others from external interactions. These ranged from the very practical (access to data or technology) to rather more intangible benefits, for the local community, or enhancing the University's reputation. When working with external partners, academics understand that they are engaging in an evolving relationship, often multi-purpose, often overlapping with their teaching and research agenda and often long-term. Therefore, benefits are also put into this long-term perspective, with only small short-term benefits, but possibly greater long-term rewards. It may take a number of years to reap major reward, and there may be secondary benefits (such as guest lectures, students placements etc) which have low financial value but have broad and important impact on the institution. This degree of flexibility (and long-term investment) is managed by the single academic and often – unless there is a contract or income generated – it is not "always known, measured or indeed fully recognised by the School and University.

Recommendations

Promote diversity of external engagement practices: the interviews highlighted a broad range of external engagement practice: not only contracts and consultancy, but also for example guest lecturing, MSc projects and others. The University should raise awareness of this range of practices and celebrate external engagement more broadly, not only in relation to big contractual agreements. The development of case studies which highlight this range of collaboration could improve the overall understanding of external engagement at the University and enable learning from good practice across the institution. More routine contact with external organisations at a variety of levels should also improve understanding of the University and its business and potential as a collaborative partner.

Valuing inter-disciplinary research: while many appreciated the opportunity to understand

better the range of research activities taking place, the value of interdisciplinarity could also be promoted further by the USRG, even if simply presenting some of the interdisciplinary work already taking place at the University. This would reinforce the value of having networks like the USRG at the University and provide a basis for further interdisciplinary collaborations.

Involving more Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in the USRG: Younger members of staff represent less than 10% of the USRG (according to our sample of respondents). The USRG might need to have a specific strategy to fully engage the early career academics. This could improve the career development for the ECRs and also capitalise fully on research and other expertise within the USRG. For instance, having a younger member of staff representing ECRs on the USRG board could enable a more representative view of the issues that Maritime Studies face in Southampton.

2. How the university can best enhance its research agenda and add value to existing collaborations, including CPD opportunities

The interviewees frequently cited lack of time as a barrier to their external engagement - meaning it is difficult to take on a potentially time intensive activity in addition to teaching, research and administrative activities. However, they also felt that help or support was limited or lacking to facilitate this engagement. In particular, younger members of staff highlighted the steep learning curve needed to build relations and the know-how to deal with external organisations.

Most of the interviewees saw in the USRG a potential platform to support external engagement (alongside internal collaboration). While senior academics seemed to place limited value on the USRG, as they have enough experience to engage directly with other academics and external partners, younger members of staff saw in the USRG the possibility of acquiring a greater awareness of the knowledge-base in Maritime Studies within the University. They also saw the USRG as a platform to create opportunities to interact with the outside but also to learn the know-how of external engagement.

The SNA has shown that the USRG has been successful in creating awareness amongst academics but also a platform for dialogue across Schools and Faculties. However, many highlighted the need for the USRG to become more relevant in presenting Maritime Studies to the outside and also to coordinate activities which could be relevant across Schools. In particular, a few interviewees mentioned that the USRG could play a stronger role in coordinating the University of Southampton presence and collaboration with the Sea City Museum.

Recommendations

Growing the external engagement expertise of academics: Whether junior or senior, the level of academic expertise and confidence towards external engagement is varied across the USRG. It would be useful, to create a means to facilitate knowledge sharing in relation to external engagement. The documentation and sharing of case studies of external engagement may help, as would inviting ECRs to shadow experienced staff at meetings and business activities, whether those staff are immediate colleagues or experienced colleagues from another area (e.g. Research and Innovation Services or another School).

Increase the University profile and engagement with the city: from the interviews, it was clear that Southampton and its surroundings did not play a significant role in external engagement activities. While this might be a result of a lack of opportunity or of local partners, there was a common view from interviewees that this could be improved and that this might influence the capacity of the University to interact with the city when the opportunity arises. The development of the Sea City Museum in Southampton could become a means to explore external engagement, outreach and the civic role of the University and should be taken forward by key university representatives as such an opportunity.

Increase discussion and knowledge sharing about CPD opportunities and their impact: only some interviewees were aware of the potential of CPD development, but many did not consider CPD development as part of their role. An increased awareness of the practices and potential of CPD should be promoted, perhaps as a means to add value to existing relationships. As noted earlier, CPD here is used in the broadest sense, to include M level provision. Notably, CPD requires flexible delivery (for non- traditional university students) and this would require different skills and competencies to support, so it would be appropriate for discussions to take place at School or Faculty level, about potential opportunities and the implications this has for academic practice.

3. To identify the appropriate support structures and procedures to facilitate employer responsive provision, including means of delivery

Most of the interviewees were satisfied with the role that the USRG had played in making them aware of others' research within the University and further opportunities to showcase their work. However, many saw more potential and opportunities for the USRG to fulfil both in respect to knowledge sharing (and as mentioned the professional development of younger members of staff) and external engagement. In particular the opportunity for the USRG to become not only a vehicle to promote the Maritime Studies within the University and externally but also a platform to provide better opportunities – created by mixing and tailoring a variety of experts and facilities – for engaging with employers and public policy organisations.

Some interviewees perceived that there were occasions when internal procedures or structures made external engagement more problematic, even if the political will was present to encourage it. For instance, financial and legal procedures were mentioned specifically. The University as a whole, it was noted, was not generally in a position to seek fast solutions

to problems, whereas the private sector often is. Additionally, certain aspects of institutional infrastructure further hinder external engagement. For instance, the speed of reaction to requests was observed to have been hampered by the time taken to draft and finalise contracts and agreements. The broader issue of a lack of understanding of the University business and its range of potential collaborations is also relevant here.

Recommendations

Creating time for external engagement and a reward system. If the University supports external engagement for a variety of reasons, including greater impact for research and CPD opportunities, then there needs to be both a strategic commitment and a reward system to encourage this. The current Education Strategic Plan highlights a commitment to engagement but there needs to be a means to ensure that academics have both the opportunity (time) and motivation (beyond personal) to ensure that this takes place.

More efficient knowledge sharing platforms: While the USRG has created valuable interactions and awareness across Schools and divisions, it is clear from the SNA that knowledge travels through very specific structures and key nodes within Schools. A more flexible and open platform may benefit the USRG to allow knowledge to reach more peripheral nodes and also to ensure the periphery can feed valuable information to the core. A platform for exchange (also creating continuity over time) could be a blog or a bi-monthly newsletter, where members can update others on their project / progress, where grant opportunities (or opportunities to engage) can be advertised and seminars or other academics can be promoted. This would create also a sense of ‘continuity’ over time, as many felt that the USRG was coming together only in specific occasions (such as the launch event).

Research and Innovation Services and USRG structure: in considering the results of the SNA and interviews here, there seems to be a degree of incongruence between the USRG structure and the Research and Innovation Services. While the School of Engineering Sciences enjoys strong connections with key members of the Research and Innovation Services, other Schools, such as the School of Humanities, are not part of the same framework (as other members of Research and Innovation Services interact more directly with the School of Humanities). This might not be a real barrier but the opportunity to develop multi-disciplinary projects might be restricted by the need for different people within Research and Innovation Services to make sure the Maritime Studies initiatives are considered interdisciplinary. The possibility to have someone in Research and Innovation Services overlooking ‘Maritime Studies’, from a multi-disciplinary perspective, could enable more connections to be created across faculties.

Improvement of services and facilities towards professional audiences: Some highlighted the lack of facilities and services supporting external engagement and CPD. In particular, areas of the university where employer engagement was taking place commented on the lack of catering / conferencing facilities or parking, but also how the services on campus – specifically tailored towards students – did not facilitate professional interactions. The EEI has associated funds which are being dedicated to develop some spaces as high quality training and meeting space, but more work needs to be done to ensure that all additional services are high-quality, including the public-facing administrative systems. This is part of the greater issue of need for better communication and increased communication with external partners, to improve mutual understanding.

Future and further research

The research has revealed a diversity of activity and approach to collaboration both internally and externally within the Maritime Studies USRG. The study has documented these relationships in a way which allows us to learn from the structure and see opportunities for change and development. The recommendations above are just some of those opportunities.

In general, there was a clear acknowledgment that any means (or strategy) to interconnect academics (and their different expertise) and promote the profile of the University was appreciated. There was often the assumption that there is not enough awareness across Faculties and Schools, as well as Professional Services, of what is going on within the University and how certain types of work or projects could be shared and improved by knowledge-sharing. A better understanding of knowledge and professional networks within the University should be encouraged as it creates coherence and critical mass when the University is presented in external contexts. In order to engage effectively and efficiently with external partners it is important to have a clear picture of strength, connections and possibilities offered by academics and their knowledge and professional networks. It may be helpful to develop some infographics that visually represent the links that academics and academic teams have, as a communications tool to broaden and deepen everyone's understanding of the actuality and potential of our academic community in the wider community.

Additionally the methodology used here is one which can be applied to a variety of networks or groups. This is particularly important in areas where we depend (as we increasingly do) on informal networks and relations. Research is clearly an area where this is the case, as academics frequently build relationships which relate to their own academic profile rather than as a result of external drivers. In the University of Southampton there are a variety of other areas where we could use social network analysis to identify how informal networks which support the strategic aims of the University function, and how they may be developed and improved. For instance, there is a wealth of roles at academic and institutional level which have an employer engagement component – such as industrial liaison officers, employability officers, careers staff and so on. The research methodology could provide a means to discuss the network, roles and relations, and provide a valuable basis for strategic development.

Appendix Documents

Appendix 1 – Members of the Maritime Studies USRG

Members	School / Division affiliation
Dr Dragana Nikolic	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Prof Robert Allen	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Prof Michael Brennan	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Mr Richard Collier	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Prof Victor Humphrey	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Prof Timothy Leighton	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Dr Christopher Lewis	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Mr Matthew Parker	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Mr Malcolm Smith	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Prof Steve Elliott	Institute of Sound and Vibration Research
Mr Mike Douglas	National Oceanography Center
Dr Maarten Furlong	National Oceanography Center
Mr Steve Hall	National Oceanography Center
Dr David Lewis	National Oceanography Center
Mr Steve McPhail	National Oceanography Center
Dr Matt Mowlem	National Oceanography Center
Mr Roland Rogers	National Oceanography Center
Mr Kevin Saw	National Oceanography Center
Mr Peter Stevenson	National Oceanography Center
Ms Jacky Wood	National Oceanography Center
Prof Edward Hill	National Oceanography Center
Prof Gwyn Griffiths	National Oceanography Center / School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Carl Amos	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Justin Dix	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Neil Wells	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Brian Bett	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr David Billett	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Steve Boswell	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Prof Harry Bryden	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Rachel Mills	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Prof John Bull	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Valborg Byfield	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Mr Rob Curry	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Mr Alan Evans	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr David Hydes	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Mr Colin Jacobs	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Boris Kelly-Gerreyn	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Mr Peter Hunter	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Prof Richard Lampitt	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Robert Marsh	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Prof Tim Minshull	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Prof Lindsay Parsons	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science

Prof Meric Srokosz	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Prof Andrew Roberts	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Charlie Thompson	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Peter Talling	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Dr Michael Tsimplis	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Prof Ian Wright	National Oceanography Center / School of Ocean and Earth Science
Robin Axford	Research & Innovation Services
Kevin Forshaw	Research & Innovation Services
Hilary Smith	Research & Innovation Services
Dr Tony Raven	Research & Innovation Services
Don Spalinger	Research and Innovation Services / Director of Corporate Relationships
Prof Bill Keevil	School of Biological Sciences
Prof David Harrowven	School of Chemistry
Prof John Evans	School of Chemistry
Prof John Owen	School of Chemistry
Prof. AbuBakr Bahaj	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr William Batten	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Luke Blunden	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Sally Brown	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Prof John Chaplin	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Derek Clarke	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Mr Jack Giles	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Paul Kemp	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Mr. Mark Leybourne	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Mustafa Mokrech	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Gerald Muller	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Luke Myers	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Prof Robert Nicholls	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Prof John Preston	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Dr Ben Waterson	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Prof Chris Clayton	School of Civil Engineering and the Environment
Prof Harvey Rutt	School of Electronics and Computer Science
Dr Zed Sabeur	School of Electronics and Computer Science
Dr Colin Upstill	School of Electronics and Computer Science
Prof Mark Spearing	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Janice Barton	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr James Blake	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Stephen Boyd	School of Engineering Sciences
Mr Ian Campbell	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Zhi-Min Chen	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Grant Hearn	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Dominic Hudson	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Kai Luo	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Simon Quinn	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Philip Wilson	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Geraint Price	School of Engineering Sciences

Prof Ajit Sheno	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Ming-yi Tan	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Dominic Taunton	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Penny Temarel	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Stephen Turnock	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Yeping Xiong	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Xin Zhang	School of Engineering Sciences
Dr Julian Wharton	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Frank Walsh	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Robert Wood	School of Engineering Sciences
Prof Peter Atkinson	School of Geography
Prof Paul Carling	School of Geography
Prof Steve Darby	School of Geography
Mr Chris Hill	School of Geography
Mr Jason Sadler	School of Geography
Prof Steven Pinch	School of Geography
Prof David Sear	School of Geography
Prof Peter Sunley	School of Geography
Dr Jonathan Adams	School of Humanities
Dr Julia Banister	School of Humanities
Prof Tim Bergfelder	School of Humanities
Dr Lucy Blue	School of Humanities
Prof Bill Brooks	School of Humanities
Ms Frances Clarke	School of Humanities
Prof Elizabeth Dore	School of Humanities
Dr Mary Hammond	School of Humanities
Dr Graeme Earl	School of Humanities
Dr Stephanie Jones	School of Humanities
Dr Marianne O'Doherty	School of Humanities
Prof Matthew Johnson	School of Humanities
Dr James Jordan	School of Humanities
Prof Simon Keay	School of Humanities
Prof Tony Kushner	School of Humanities
Prof John Oldfield	School of Humanities
Dr Christer Petley	School of Humanities
Dr Prem Poddar	School of Humanities
Prof Joachim Schloer	School of Humanities
Dr François Soyer	School of Humanities
Dr Fraser Sturt	School of Humanities
Prof Yvonne Baatz	School of Law
Prof Charles Debattista	School of Law
Dr Andrew Serdy	School of Law
Mr Richard Shaw	School of Law
Prof Hilton Staniland	School of Law
Dr Julia Bennell	School of Management
Dr Tolga Bektas	School of Management

Dr Arni Halldorssan	School of Management
Prof Douglas Macbeth	School of Management
Prof Stephen Ward	School of Management
Prof Terry Williams	School of Management
Dr Yue Wu	School of Management
Prof Richard Dale	School of Management
Prof Jacek Brodzki	School of Mathematics
Prof Jörg Fliege	School of Mathematics
Dr Marvin Jones	School of Mathematics
Prof Colin Please	School of Mathematics
Prof Chris Potts	School of Mathematics
Prof James Vickers	School of Mathematics
Prof John Forster	School of Mathematics
Professor J Simpson	School of Social Sciences
Mr John Gillett	Winchester School of Art
Prof Bashir Makhoul	Winchester School of Art

Appendix 2 – Ethical Guidelines Documents

Research description, Ethics & Data protection

Project: Mapping and understanding the external engagement of the University of Southampton in the MARITIME sector

Background

This research project will take place between November and February 2009 and will involve academics of the Maritime Studies strategic research group. It is part of a Business Fellowship within the Employer Engagement Initiative, which is funded by HEFCE and led by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit.

Aim

The project aims to map and understand external engagement of academic staff, within the Maritime Studies USRG, in order to assess the type of relations and exchanges taking place with companies, public sector bodies and other organisations.

Methods

Social network analysis: to create a map of external engagement dynamics: such as type/nature of relations, type of external partners involved, strength of exchange etc.

What is social network analysis?
<p>Social network analysis (SNA) is a powerful and relatively new research tool which has developed popularity in recent years. It “provides a way to make the invisible visible and the intangible tangible” (Borgatti & Molina, 2003, p. 337). In order to examine the network-level phenomena of interest to social network analysts, researchers have used a survey method called sociometrics. Free-response is used to determine ego-centric networks, in which the respondent is the centre of a personal network. This method is often used in large-scale network studies or when the boundaries of a network are unknown. The resulting data can contribute to system network if the reported relationships are combined with others from the system, making interconnections apparent. This is the method used in the current research. In contrast, rosters are used when the boundaries of a network are known (e.g., a classroom or organisational setting). All parties in the network are polled for their relationships. Roster data contributes to knowledge of all of the interconnections in a whole network.</p> <p>Simply asking respondents for their contacts (based upon friendship, acquaintance, expertise, etc.) is the most basic sociometry. The resulting respondent names and their contacts are organised into pictorial sociograms in which each respondent-contact relationship is represented by circles with lines linking them. Some circles, or nodes, will have more than one line linking in/out, and this determines their positions in the network.</p>
For more information: http://www.analytictech.com/networks/whatis.htm

Qualitative interviews: to investigate the nature of these collaborations, how they get established and what facilitates or inhibits their development.

Ethical consideration and data protection

An important prerequisite of any research conducted using human participants is the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality in order to protect them from any potential harm. As (Kadushin, 2005) argues, in social network analysis “the collection of names of either individuals or social units is not incidental to the research but its very point,” (p. 141). Therefore, the data collected will be analysed but always presented in anonymous form.

In order to guarantee confidentiality to the participants of the research a ‘confidentiality agreement form’ is provided to the participants and they are able to decide in which way they prefer to disclose (or not) the information provided.

Important! There are obvious ethical concerns when conducting social network research. This paper has outlined issues of anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. In the present research we appreciate your concerns and if before providing data you would like to talk through any issues, please contact the principal investigator: R.Comunian@soton.ac.uk

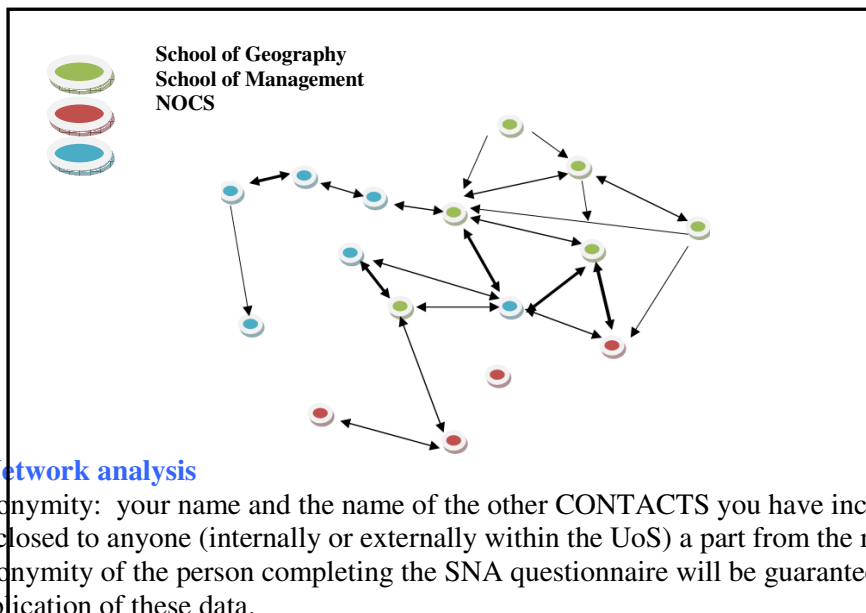
How will the data you provide for the present study be used?

When you provide names and personal contacts within this present research, you are guaranteed a certain level of anonymity. If you would like a higher level of anonymity and confidentiality you have to state this in the ‘confidentiality agreement form’ (this form is attached and you will be asked to sign it after a brief meeting with the PI).

Internal Network analysis

- Anonymity: your name and the name of the other member of the USRG will not be disclosed in the display of the network.
- Nodes (=people) will be simply grouped and analysed in function of these categories:
 - o School or research group (each individual will be coloured / identified by his/her school and research group)
 - o Seniority: individuals might be classified by their seniority level
 - o Affiliation at UoS: individuals might be identified by the length of time they have been based at UoS
 - o Gender: individuals might be classified by their gender
- While the overlapping of these categories might allow a degree of identification between the node and the person, this would only be a guess by the observer as anonymity will be respected in all uses (internal and external) of these data.

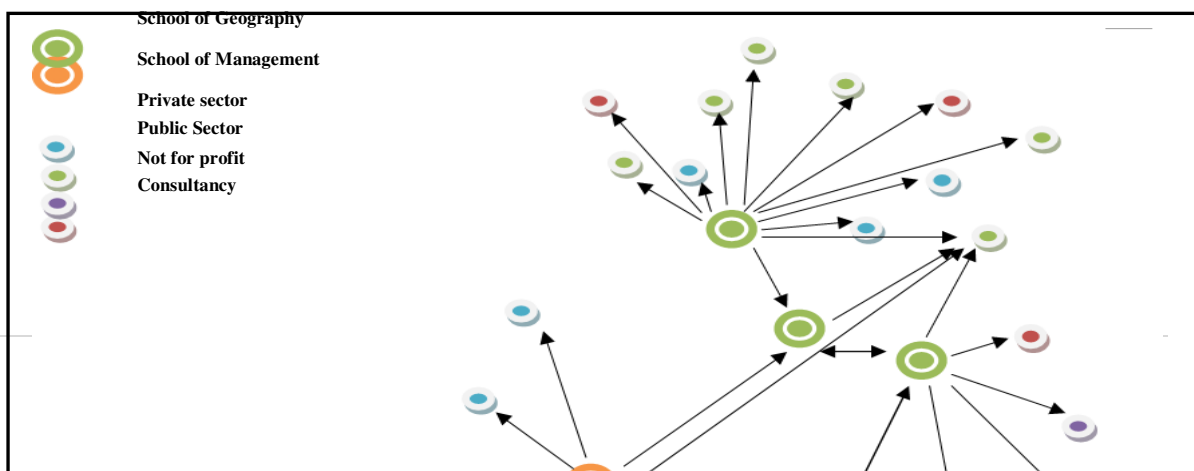
Below you can see an example of the way the data will be visualised and presented (for internal or external use)



External Network analysis

- Anonymity: your name and the name of the other CONTACTS you have included will not be disclosed to anyone (internally or externally within the UoS) a part from the researcher.
- Anonymity of the person completing the SNA questionnaire will be guaranteed in all publication of these data.
- In order to get the best use out of the data collected, we might identify the node of the contact you included using their 'company' name (you can opt out from this possibility completing the 'confidentiality agreement form'):
- Nodes (=people you mentioned as contacts) will be simply grouped and analysed in function of these categories:
 - o Their geographical location;
 - o Their sector of activity;
 - o The kind of benefit they bring to your research;
- While the overlapping of these categories might allow a degree of identification between the node and the person, this would only be a guess by the observer as anonymity will be respected in all uses (internal and external) of these data

Below you can see an example of the way the data will be visualised and presented (for internal or external use)



Appendix 3 – Confidentiality agreement form**(To be completed with the researcher)****Project: Mapping and understanding the external engagement of the University of Southampton in the MARITIME sector****Researcher: Dr Roberta Comunian, University of Southampton (School of Geography)**

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you, is part of the process of informed consent in relation to your participation to the present research project.

If you would like more detail or information, feel free to ask. Please take time to read this carefully.

- 1) The aim of the project is to map and understand external engagement of academic staff, within the Maritime Studies USRG, in order to assess the type of relations and exchanges taking place with companies, public sector bodies and other organisations.
- 2) Subjects are asked to complete two social network analysis questionnaires (one mapping internal relation, one mapping external ones) and undertake a brief interview with the researcher.
- 3) Complete confidentiality will be always maintained in reference to the person completing the questionnaires and interviews (i.e. your name will never be disclosed) including reports and publications.
- 4) In reference to the external partners you name in your social network analysis questionnaire you can choose different levels of anonymity of how the data can be showcased and presented to internal and external partners:
 - ☐ Complete anonymity: The name of the person, company will not be disclosed
 - ☐ Partial anonymity: The name of the company can be disclosed, but not the name of the person you collaborate with
- 5) Use of data by the Employer Engagement Initiative (EEI) team. The EEI is a 2 year HEFCE funded programme that aims to engage employers more closely with the University for the identification and expansion of professional development opportunities, primarily at Masters level. Some of data collected through this project will inform the initiative of EEI. Please let us know if you agree with the data you provided being shared with the Employer Engagement Initiative in these two ways:

Aggregated disclosure: The name of the company can be disclosed in a separate list which includes all the companies with which the University of Southampton Maritime Studies USRG works (without referring to you or the name of the person you work with);

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree

Possibility to get in contact with you: EEI would not use the contacts you provide to directly approach employers. If, however, an opportunity arises to involve you or any of your contacts in the programme, would you be prepared for a member of the EEI team to contact you to explore the possibilities?

- ☐ Yes, please feel free to contact me
- ☐ No

- 6) If you agreed to be interviewed as part of the research project. A digital recorder will be used during the interview. All the information will be treated as confidential and the only person to have access to the raw interview materials will be the researcher. All materials from the interview will be used in anonymous form, any name or project mentioned which might enable the identification of the participant will also be made anonymous

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding the participation in this research project and the way the data will be used and treated.

Principal investigator: Dr Roberta Comunian ext. 26711 R.Comunian@soton.ac.uk

Participant's Signature

Date

Interviewer's Signature

Date

Appendix 4 – Interview Outline

- **Introduction about the project**
 - **Use of personal information or any confidential data**
 - **Ethical guidelines and access to data**
- 1) Looking at the SNA filled in by the interviewee: you have included a variety of contacts in your list, can you please give me an overview on the nature of the project /collaborations you have been involved with that included external partners?
 - 2) What are the main benefits of collaborating with external partners?
 - a. Are your previous experiences all positive?
 - b. In which respect to you think these benefits are personal or concern also your School and the university at large?
 - 3) Motivations behind external engagement
 - a. What are your personal motivations behind engaging in these relations?
 - b. Do they help your research or teaching career?
 - c. Are they linked to CDP and teaching expansions?
 - 4) Facilitating external engagement
 - a. Did you find it easy to start these relations?
 - b. Does your job allow space / time to establish these collaborations?
 - c. What are the people / events which benefit your possibility to engage with the outside?
 - d. How do you see your participation to the Maritime Studies USRG helping developing those connections?
 - 5) Barriers to external engagement
 - a. What are the difficulties in establishing / maintaining these relationships?
 - b. How easy do you find it to capitalize also on your colleagues contacts?
 - 6) Future perspectives
 - a. Do you see yourself working with these partners more or less in the future?
 - b. What could help you establish more collaborations or making these collaborations growth?

Appendix 5 – Internal network analysis questionnaire**QUESTIONNAIRE 1: INVESTIGATING INTERNAL NETWORKS**

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE COLOURED BOXES AND
READ THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW**

Your Name and Surname								
Your School								
Research Group (within your School, if applicable)								
Year when you joined the University of Southampton as an academic								
Age (cross as appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	20-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	36-49	<input type="checkbox"/>	50 +		
Gender (cross as appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female				
Role at the University of Southampton (cross as appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainly teaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainly research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teaching and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support

INSTRUCTIONS

In the list that follows are included all academics that have expressed an interest and have been involved with the activities of the **Maritime University Strategic Research Group** since 2008. Please simply scroll down the list of names (School affiliation is also given) and assign your relationship with each person to one of the following three categories:

Relation Type 1	I have not heard about the person before or I have heard of him /her but I am not aware of his /her research/activity;
Relation Type 2	I have heard of the person and I am aware of his / her research interests /activities and strengths but I have not actively collaborated with him / her (active collaboration means one or more of the following: a common publication; a common application for funding; a common research project / consultancy; a common teaching module or supervision of shared research students). In the case of support staff (only), this might include simply knowing the person's role.
Relation Type 3	I have actively collaborated with this person in the past (active collaboration means one or more of the following: a common publication; a common application for funding; a common research project / consultancy; a common teaching module or supervision of shared research students). In case of support staff, interactions on a

Academic and research	School /	Relation type	Relation type 2	Relation type
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Appendix 6 – Interview questionnaire for external engagement

Categories		Contact 1	Contact ...	Contact 10
Organisation / company name				
Organisation's area of activities / job title (if applicable)				
Title, Initials and Surname (optional)				
What is the main type of activity of this person / organisation ? (select only one option)	Education			
	Public Sector			
	Not for profit / Charity			
	Consultancy			
	Freelance			
	Private sector / Business			
	Research Council			
	Businesses Association			
	Others (please specify)			
Where does this person / organisation work from?				
When did you start collaborating with this person / organisation ?				
How would you define your relationship with this person / organisation ?	Solely Professional			
	Both Social and Professional			
What benefits does this relationship / collaboration bring to you / your School ? (please place 1 next to the most important)	Collaboration on research projects / grants / Knowledge Transfer Partnerships			
	Collaboration / opportunities in teaching and student placement			

benefit, 2 next to secondary benefit and 3 next to other relevant benefits)	Access to funding opportunities or financial support			
	Commissioning of research or consultancy work			
	Bringing specific business knowledge within the University			
	Influencing public policy agendas in the field			
	Others (please specify)			

Appendix 7 – List of external partners organisations⁸

AA Technology
AGI
AIRBUS
American Bureau Shipping
Astrium
Atomic Weapon Establishment
AWE
BAE Surface Fleet
BAE Systems
BBC
BFI
BMT
Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation
BP
British Geological Survey
Church of England
Commercial
Crown Estate
DEFRA (2)
Department of Energy
DNV
Drake Marine International
DSTL (3)
DTI
EMU
E-ON
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
European Space Agency
FLIR
Forestry Commission (2)
GE AVIATION
Geotech
Gillings Family foundation
Home Office
INSTRON
Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change
Israel centre for immigrants from Central Europe
Jewish Museum in Berlin
Jewish Museum in London (2)

⁸ The list does not include some of the companies that the respondents wished to keep anonymous (mostly oil companies). The number in brackets indicates that the organisation was mentioned more than once, by different respondents.

LAVISION
LEO BAECK INSTITUTE LONDON
Lloyds Register (2)
Logica
Marine Climate Change Impact Partnership
Marine South East
Maritime Coastguard Agency (2)
Mary Rose Trust
Max Planck Institute
MET OFFICE (3)
MoD (4)
MRAG
Nanotecture
NASA
National Audit Office
National Composite Network
National Marine Facilities Sea Systems
National Maritime Museum in Greenwich (2)
Natural England
NERC
NSF
Office of government and commerce
P&O
Project Management Institute
Qinetiq (2)
RDAs
RNLI (4)
Roll Royce
Rothschild Foundation
Royal Marines
Royal Naval Museum
SatOC
Sea City Museum (3)
SEAEYE Marine
SEEDA
Shell
SMD Ltd
Statoil
Stockholm Environment Institute
SUERC
Surrey Satellite Systems
Sydney Jewish Museum
The Wiener Library
Total Foundation
TWI Welding
UK HE Europe Unit
UK Space Agency
VISHAY
VML
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
World Bank
WWF

Appendix I Proposals for payments in kind

Title: Contribution in Kind (CIK)

From: Leslie Pettet, School Accountant

Date: 28 November 2010

This work was prompted by Mark Merritt of the EEI, and resulted in Leslie Pettett drafting the draft paper overleaf for Kevin Jones to take to the Senior Management Accounts meeting. Although the Accountants agreed that it would be beneficial to record CIK formally in our systems, concerns were raised regarding increased workload to complete the extra data plus the need to follow up on completed grants to make sure the CIK recorded was accurate.

To progress this, a working group was formed from staff from EEI, Finance and Research and Innovation Services. It was agreed that the best way to record contribution in kind data was to set up new information fields within the University finance system, Agresso. The group discussed what data would need to be recorded plus the method of data collection. A questionnaire format to be sent to Principle Investigators was drafted, which would be initially administered by Finance staff in Professional Services.

The next stage is to get the additional fields needed added to the Agresso system which requires the proposal to be approved by the University Systems team. Due to the University re-structure, work on this has had to be delayed although it was brought up as an issue in the last Research Group meeting (Accountants in research areas meet monthly with representatives from RIS) in October 2010. The minutes of this meeting record that the issue has been put on hold until after the Finance restructure and we know what resources we have available.

Title: Contribution in Kind – Recording data in Agresso

From: Leslie Pettet, School Accountant

Date: 19 February 2010

Introduction

Report written in response to increasing requests for more comprehensive information on:

- Contributions in kind from businesses and local community – data on this not currently recorded.
- Details of collaborations – list of partners on projects – not currently recorded

Information is sought from several sources:

- RIS – to measure the level of engagement a School or Service has with industry
- Finance – Contribution in kind is returnable in the HEBCI survey (Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey), which in turn provides metrics that impact on the allocation of funds to the University from HEFCE
- Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit (LATEU) – HEFCE funded project which aims to develop relations with new employers and promote the implementation of employer engagement frameworks within Schools.

Staff from the EEI project, RIS and Finance have met to discuss these issues and suggest the following procedure to collect contribution in kind data.

Proposal

- 1. List all collaborative partners in Agresso** – When a new project is set up in Agresso, additional fields added to Project Master file so that all collaborative partners can be recorded. This enables more comprehensive reporting.
- 2. Use a questionnaire spreadsheet sent to budget holders to collect contribution in kind data. Draft version of spreadsheet and proposed workflow attached as appendices** – The questionnaire would be generated for new project codes, the subproject code plus the list of collaborators would be automatically completed from an Agresso download. We would need to go back to budget holders to check that contribution in kind values declared originally actually occurred.

Expected benefits

- Captures the true value of a project to the School or Service
- Understanding, (qualifying/quantifying) relationships with business and community

- Employer engagement

Leslie Pettet

Direct tel: +44 (0)23 808320

Appendix J Ongoing report templates

Employer Engagement Initiative: Contact Report

Organisation	Contact Report			
Example plc www.example.co.uk	Contact/Meeting Date:	2 Feb 2010	Campus/ Location:	Head Office
	Attendees (name, role, contact details):			
	Brendan Webster	Business Fellow	r.b.webster@soton.ac.uk x23785	
	Jane Smith	Training Manager	j.smith@exampleplc.com 01234 787 654	
	Notes, Outcomes:			
	Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">			
Organisation	Contact Report			
	Contact/Meeting Date:		Campus/ Location:	
	Attendees (name, role, contact details):			
	Notes, Outcomes:			
	Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">			
Organisation	Contact Report			
	Contact/Meeting Date:		Campus/ Location:	
	Attendees (name, role, contact details):			
	Notes, Outcomes:			
	Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">			

Employer Engagement Initiative: Monthly Progress Report

Project	Business Fellow / Sector Springboards within EEI
Required EEI outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Contribute to successful and active network (6)Market current provision and scope new (7)Approach employers in sector (5)Pursue ‘new’ relationships (5)Sector springboard (3)Develop employer engagement framework (5)
Team member:	
Report month:	

Days this month: ⁹	
Progress and achievements :	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Issues, problems and opportunities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Plans for next month:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Look at this: (e.g. web, documents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

⁹ Days spent – out of full-time equivalent (FTE) 108 days over 12 month period, i.e. 27 days per quarter

Appendix K Corporate Relationship Strategy

Memo

To:	UEG	From:	D. Spalinger, P.A. Nelson
Date:	25th April 2010		
Re:	Strategic Plan for Corporate Relationships		
cc:			

1. Context

The Strategic Plan for Corporate Relationships is intended to support the new University Strategy. The plan proposed here seeks to deliver an enhancement of the University's engagement with a number of key corporations and industry sectors. The final form of this plan will be aligned with the actions required by the Strategic Plans for Research and Education that are also currently under development.

The Strategic Plan for Corporate Relationships is integral to a number of actions currently listed in the draft Strategic Plans for Research and Education. These include:

- Developing long term research partnerships through the exploitation of our intellectual wealth, thus increasing research income, either directly from corporations or from collaborative projects undertaken with corporations.
- Maximising the impact of research through making university research accessible to a wide range of businesses and other organisations.
- Expanding our engagement with employers to increase opportunities for students and graduates to gain work experience and employment including placements, internships, student exchanges and voluntary work.
- Using our engagement with employers to improve the proportion of our graduates that become successfully employed

The plan presented here aims to support the delivery of these key actions.

2. Measuring success in the development of corporate relationships

The successful delivery of the above actions might be assessed with reference to the following metrics identified as resulting directly from corporate relationships developed by the University:

- Research income (including that income resulting from research collaborations but not necessarily received directly from the collaborating corporation)
- Research impact reported to the Research Excellence Framework
- Number of student placements and internships
- Number of students employed

Whilst these might be regarded as reasonable measurements of progress, it should be noted that the successful measurement of these parameters will require some change in the capability of

current systems. One of the key targets will be the increase in research income associated with each of the companies, whether achieved through directly funded contracts from the company, or as is more likely, through collaboratively funded work. A key requirement here is to develop systems that enable corporate contributions to collaborative work to be identified and measured.

The assessment and measurement of the “impact” of research is clearly an important metric associated with the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and it will be necessary to develop University-wide systems for recording impact outcomes.

In order for our students to become ‘graduates of global distinction’, it is critical that they have as much engagement with the commercial world during their educational career as possible. Student internships and class projects with external organisations is a viable measure of this engagement. Currently there are a multitude of systems across the University that keep track of these types of engagements. In order to use these as a measurable parameter, a system for expanding and consolidating the collection of this data will be necessary. The student database being developed in Career Destinations may hold the best prospects for collecting this information directly from the students themselves.

The employment of our graduates is another key target that will require the development of a reliable data collection system since much of the recruitment process is negotiated outside of the current University tracking systems. It may be possible to base such a system on the existing work in the Career Destinations organisation and in the Alumni Office. Again the direct collection of employment information from graduates into these databases needs to be pursued. It is noted that the continuation of students’ e-mail accounts after graduation would facilitate this data collection and continuing contact.

3. Strategic Plan for Corporate Relationships

The University of Southampton has a long history of working with corporations, supplying companies around the world with graduates of global distinction and collaborating on world leading research. Our proposed Corporate Relationship Strategy builds upon that history and aims to elevate and expand the nature of the relationships.

These relationships take many forms. Appendix A lists the types of relationships that the University has with external organisations. They are almost always with individuals within the organisations at all levels from the CEO and Board of Directors to engineers and line managers. Therefore, the ‘relationship’ that the University has with any particular organisation is a compilation of these individual one-to-one relationships. Some of these are generic, such as the recruitment of graduates by a large company that hires a large number of graduates from campuses around the world. Other relationships are exclusive, such as that between a senior researcher and the CTO (of possibly the same large company) that has been funding his research for many years. Thus coordinating the relationships with this company is a potentially complex task. Our strategy for dealing with external organisations must therefore encompass this range of possible interactions and therefore there cannot be a “one size fits all” approach.

It is helpful to classify commercial organisations by industrial sector. Organising the University’s Corporate Relationship Strategy around these industrial sectors provides a natural and efficient approach. An analysis of our current position shows that our strongest corporate relationships are aggregated into a few of these industrial sectors.

The engagement with employers of our graduates must necessarily be broad and inclusive. With the sectors as guides, we are developing databases which can be used by our students to identify organisations that would enhance their educational experience with internships, student projects, etc. These will be used to build the student’s Career Destinations Passport.

In research, we are working with over 600 different organisations at any time. The research agenda thus presents similar challenges to that for employer engagement. Working with industry sectors will assist in organising and coordinating our activities with this expanding group of organisations.

A proactive approach is to pursue a strategy focussed on selected industrial sectors and on a selected number of key companies within those sectors. If the early selection of distinct sectors and companies proves successful in terms of the metrics defined above, then we will expand the number of sectors and the number of companies within each.

4. Key Industry Sectors with 'Top 12 Companies'

An analysis of the current research engagement of the University with 600 companies suggests an approach summarised in the table below. The second column shows a rough estimate of the number of companies in each sector with whom the University has active research engagement. It should be emphasised that this data, which is based on that derived from the R&IS database of active research agreements, should only be regarded as indicative of the scale of the interaction with different industry sectors.

INDUSTRY SECTOR	NUMBER OF COMPANIES	SUGGESTED KEY PARTNERS
Aerospace	45	EADS, Rolls-Royce, BAE Systems, Qinetiq
Health and Pharmaceuticals	160	Glaxo Smith Kline, Novartis, Astrazeneca, DePuy
Information and Communication technologies	40	IBM, Microsoft, BT
Energy and Infrastructure	80	National Grid
Marine	40	
Financial services	25	
Creative industries	50	
Retailing	20	

It is proposed here that the initial focus should be on the first two sectors in the above table, i.e., Aerospace, and Health and Pharmaceuticals, and if there is good engagement from the academic community with the approach suggested, that steps are taken to form other industry sector teams.

5. University Industry Sector Teams (UISTs)

The industry sectors matrix across the schools, curriculum, and research groups within the University. Thus there are many and varied opportunities for relationships with a particular company and its industrial sector. The Maritime USRG which is sector specific (in contrast with the other USRGs which are focused on global research challenges) has shown good early achievements in coordinating many groups around the University which have a maritime involvement. It has also shown the ability to engage with the external organisations in this industry sector. The early success of this group suggests that this model of engagement may be extended to other sectors.

In order to develop specific action plans for building stronger University/company relationships, it is proposed that 'University Industry Sector Teams' (UISTs) be formed. These Sector Teams will also take the actions proposed and monitor the execution of the plans.

It must be emphasised that these industry sector teams are not an attempt to establish an account management organisation which may interfere with existing relationships. These teams are intended to provide a vehicle to assist with the further development of existing and new relationships. The teams will gather information on the existing relationships, and therefore be a resource point for all within the University and provide access to information about what activities are on-going in the sector and its associated companies. With this information resource, the Industry Sector Team will facilitate the development of new strategies for the University to expand its relationships with the sector and companies. A brief outline follows of the proposed membership and activities of the Industrial Sector Teams.

Each team will be composed of individuals from across the University representing all of the various types of relationships that we have with companies in the specific sector. The typical membership of each Sector Team might in the first instance consist of the following (although this membership may be evolved over time):

1. Sector Team Chair: a senior member of staff (academic or administrative) with close working relationships with one or a number of key companies in the sector.
2. University Industrial Advisory Board Member: a senior external figure working in the industry sector
3. Representative of each of the major research groups engaged with the sector
4. Representative of each School with significant educational and student activities involved with the sector.
5. Representative from Student Services.
6. Representative from Research and Innovation Services.

Typical activities of the Industry Sector Teams might be to:

1. Develop plans for expanding the University's involvement within the sector
2. Gather intelligence relating to the sector and its key players.
3. Collect data to monitor the status of the University's involvement in the sector.
4. Organise focus groups/brainstorming events, including collaboration with industry representatives, to identify opportunities for the University's expansion in the sector.
5. Organise showcase events – regular (at least annually) sector focused showcase to which key companies are invited. Showcase the University from a research, education, enterprise, and student perspective

6. Key Company Teams

In addition to engaging with specific industry sectors as described above, it is also proposed that relationships with specific companies are coordinated through Key Company Teams. These teams will be similar to the sector teams (and are likely to be a sub-set of the sector team) but with a focus on the University's relationships with a specific company. The Key Company Teams could:

1. Develop plans for expanding each of the types of relationships with the company.
2. Regularly review the plans.
3. Profile the relationship with the company and keep it updated, especially with regard to the metrics defined in Section 2 above.

4. Understand and focus on the issues that 'keep the company's CEO and senior executives awake at night'.
5. If possible, secure membership on the company's Board of Directors and/or other company boards and committees which have external members.
6. Ensure representation of a senior executive from the company on the UoS Strategic Industrial Advisory Board.
7. Ensure the membership of appropriate company executives on all of the relevant school and research group industrial advisory boards.

It is proposed that in the first instance, two company teams might be formed to investigate the practicability of this proposal. If successful, this model could be extended ultimately to all of the "top twelve" companies with whom the University has a strong relationship and possibly others as this agenda is further developed. Formed around the Microsoft High Performance Computing Group is a fledgling Microsoft Team. This Microsoft Team already has active participation from researchers in Engineering Sciences, ECS, Archaeology, and iSolutions. This and other similar groups can be used to build the Company Teams.

7. Industrial Advisory Boards

Industrial Advisory Boards (IABs) are an established approach for gaining the involvement of key individuals from external organisation in the activities of the University. During 2009 a survey of the Schools was undertaken to determine the extent to which Schools made use of advisory boards. The results of this survey are presented in Appendix B. In addition to the advisory groups within the Schools, there is a University level IAB that was initially organised to advise the KTA program, which has evolved into a strategic advisory board spanning the entire University. The Corporate Relationship Strategy builds upon these existing industrial advisory boards to increase their effectiveness and better engage strategic external stakeholders.

In brief, the plans for the University of Southampton Strategic IAB are as follows:

- Evolve the Strategic IAB from the existing University-wide KTA IAB that has been operating for the past 4 years. The existing IAB has helpfully articulated strategic perspectives from the commercial community and has assisted the University in beginning to modify its actions towards that community.
- The reformulated Strategic IAB will build from a core of the existing members who are senior executives in their respective corporations, by adding additional senior executive members from each of our top target companies.

A working meeting of a subgroup of the existing IAB took place on 10th March 2010 to discuss this reformulation and develop a plan of action to recruit the desired new members. The working group was extremely enthusiastic about the creation of UISTs. They believe that UISTs signal to the executives in the industry that the University is serious about engaging with the industry and understanding how the University can make positive contributions.

Most of the existing Schools and several of the larger research groups have their own IAB or equivalent (Appendix B). Individual School and Research Group IABs might be developed as follows:

- The Director of Corporate Relationships should work with each of these IABs and the sponsoring University organisations to make them effective.
- Ensure that each IAB has an appropriate charter to deliver the desired objectives to the sponsoring organisation.

- Ensure that each IAB has the appropriate members both from the desired external organisations and the correct executive members.
- Ensure that each of the top target companies is appropriately represented on these IABs.

8. Membership of Corporate Boards of Directors

Many corporations in the United States have academics as members of their Board of Directors. It is proposed that the University should encourage and enable senior members of staff to be appointed as members of the Board of key corporations. Membership would give the academic a strategic view of the corporation with visibility of the directions for growth, and problems needing solutions. It should also enhance the credibility of the University and give access and working relationships with members of senior management. This in turn should open up opportunities for expanding the University's relationship with the corporation.

9. Membership of Commercial Organisations and Service on their Boards and Panels

Members of the University community should be encouraged to join and participate in commercially focused organisations. Examples of this are the CBI, Technology Strategy Board, UK India Business Council, Chambers of Commerce, various KTNs (Knowledge Transfer Networks), etc. Participation in these organisations provides the University with credibility in the commercial community, and encourages the development of greater contacts within commercial organisations.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

- (1) Instigate University Industry Sector Teams in two sectors (Aerospace, and Health and Pharmaceuticals) and evaluate the progress of these teams over the period until December 2010.
- (2) Instigate Key Company Teams to engage with BAe Systems and AstraZeneca and evaluate the progress of these teams over the period until December 2010.
- (3) Reconstitute the University Industrial Advisory Board to include senior representatives of the "top twelve" companies with whom the University has an existing strong relationship.

Appendix A. Types of Relationships with External Organisations

- Research Funding
 - Company investment
 - Coop funding in conjunction with RC and other consortiums
 - In-kind
- Publications with joint authorship
- Consultancy
- Licenses
- Visiting Professorships
- Entrepreneurs in residence
- Secondments – both directions
 - Company to University
 - University to company
- Seminar/Lectures – both directions
 - Company employees at the University
 - University employees at the company
- Events – both directions
 - University events attended by company personnel
 - Company events attended by University personnel
- Advisory Boards – both directions
 - University advisory boards – externals on University boards
 - External advisory boards – University on external boards
- Employer Engagement - Curriculum
 - Undergraduate curriculum
 - Postgraduate curriculum
 - CPD
- Employer Engagement - Studentships
 - KTP
 - EngD
 - Interns
 - Class Projects
 - Scholarships
 - Studentships
 - Prizes
 - Awards
 - Mentoring
 - Work shadowing
- Recruitment of graduates
 - Career fairs
 - Employer presentations
 - Employability skills workshops
 - Advertising openings to potential recruits
- Alumni
- Students (at University) who are children of key employees of company
- Purchases from company (procurement)

Appendix B. Industrial Advisory Boards across the University: Headlines from Survey of Schools

Faculty of Engineering Science and Mathematics	With IAB	Without IAB
Chemistry	X	
Civil Engineering & the Environment	X	
Electronics & Computer Science	X	
Engineering Sciences	X	
Geography	X	
ISVR	X	
Mathematics	X	
National Oceanography Centre	X	
Ocean and Earth Sciences		X
Optoelectronics Research Centre		X
Physics & Astronomy		X

Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences	With IAB	Without IAB
Art	X	
Humanities		X
Education	X	
Law	X	
Management	X	
Social Sciences	X	

Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences	With IAB	Without IAB
Biological Sciences		X
Health Sciences	X	
Medicine		X
Psychology		X

It should be noted that some Schools have discipline specific Industrial Advisory Boards. Thus some Schools have multiple boards. Also in some Schools the advisory board(s) does not cover all of the activities/disciplines within that School. An example is Maths which shares an advisory board with Management that is focused on CORMSIS (Centre for Operational Research, Management Science and Information Systems). Some Schools are in the process of creating new boards, such as Physics & Astronomy which is setting up SEPNET (South East Physics Network) with several other physics department at other SE England universities.

Appendix L Technology Enhanced Learning Guide

For online copy see

http://www.southampton.ac.uk/lateu/institutional_development/TEL/TEL_guide.html

See related pdf file.

