

Title of the initiative
Solution Oriented Research unit
Idea origin (country) The name the country where the inspired practice came from
United Kingdom
Idea origin (institution) The name the institution where the inspired practice came from
Heriot Watt University
Brief description
The idea of the initiative is to create a solution-oriented research unit in the university that help in collaborating with the private sector. This unit shall enable researchers at the University to have access to private companies to locate problems in specific fields of interest and attempt to study and find solutions to them.
Idea focus The focus of the inspired practice was on
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research implementation
Why is it considered an Inspiring Practice?
The initiative is a new process at the university, and aims to insert the unit as part of the university organigram. In this sense, it aims to promote a structural reform to modernize the university governance and management processes. The unit aims to be a collaborative space between HEIs and local stakeholders, with a particular focus on the private sector, thus reinforcing the dialogue between education and industry. As innovative element, it differentiate from technology transfer offices because it implies a flow of information in the opposite direction: in the first case, research results are transferred to the industrial world; in the latter case instead the companies and actors in the private sector gives inputs and direction to the research processes at the university.
Relevance of the initiative in its specific context (why was it developed, why is it important in its specific context, what type of change it generated for the target group, relevance at local / national / international)
The initiative supports the dialogue between HEIs and private companies which share the same objective of tackling societal needs and challenges. It has the potential to improve the relevance of the research developed at the university, and to connect research outcomes to industrial developments. Moreover, the private sector can benefit from the knowledge base and research results produced by university researchers and improve the quality of the products and services produced for the society.
Target Group of the practice

- Academic staff
- Administrative staff

Impact

How the initiative produced an impact in its context and beyond

It opens research opportunities to staff at the university, which will result in serving the community. It opens opportunities for the private sector to be more relevant for the society. It promotes a bilateral approach to the exchanges between academia and industry, so that they complement and increase synergies.

Transferability of the initiative

Which elements can be adapted and transferred to other contexts/fields

The approach adopted for generating connection between the university and the private sector can be replicated. In case a new unit cannot be created, the research centers and/or the international relation office can be promoter of the dialogue between academia and industry and reinforce contamination and knowledge exchange.

Sustainability of the initiative

The factors favoring the success of the initiative over time

Higher Education Institutions shall invest in dedicating human resources, space and facilities in the creation of the new unit. Over time, being the unit promoter of the encounter between the university and the stakeholders in the private sector, it is very likely that private companies will be willing to fund research projects and equipment.

Contact and references

Link: <https://www.hw.ac.uk/research.htm>