

How regional is UK university engagement with business?

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Introduction

- During 2000s emphasis in England on regional development agencies
 - Government encouragement of university regional engagement
 - Regional HE associations and regional development agencies
 - Regional innovation strategies
- Coalition government of 2010 abolished regional tier in England replaced with Local Enterprise Partnerships. Several studies and initiatives to encourage university-business links, but without clear regional driver. New national industrial strategy in late 2017
- How has university engagement at regional and local level been affected by these changes?

Part of RUNIN Lincoln

- Main themes of the Lincoln work
 - Role of personal networks in university-business links
 - How universities are involved in regional innovation strategies, such as through ERDF
- Wider interest in the institutional environment within which academics seek to engage with business and the wider regional community

Regional engagement in theory

- Technology transfer literature tends to see regional engagement as a consequence of proximity – firms look for university partners and are slightly more likely to choose nearby universities (Jaffe et al 1993; Acs et al 1994; Abramovsky and Simpson, 2011; Broström, 2010)
- Regional Innovation System literature sees universities as part of local systems – embedded in social relations. Partnerships emerge as part of institutionalised networks, often developed as a consequence of specific regional policies (Asheim and Coenen 2005; Lawton Smith 2007)
- The engaged university literature sees universities as anchor institutions with responsibilities to support local business, actively seeking local partnerships (AASCU, 2002; Breznitz and Feldman, 2010; Goddard and Vallance, 2013)

	Territorial focus	Demands	University activities
Entrepreneurial University	May be local partnerships and spin offs tend to be local	Driven by income generation to replace falling public funding	Mainly focused on S&T commercialisation
Triple helix	Implies local partnership with govt and industry	Combination of income generation and economic development	As above but with broader remit to include skills
Regional Innovation Systems	Regional policy framework	Economic development policies	Mainly S&T but specialist inputs from other disciplines – skills and research focused
New Production of Knowledge (Mode 2 knowledge)	No specific territorial expectations	Demands for new types of knowledge	Focus on new disciplines and transdisciplinarity, but cutting across all disciplines
Scholarship of Engagement	Mainly local but can involve action at a distance	Individual academics or community	Could be any discipline but strong engagement by social science and humanities
Stewardship of Place/ Engaged University	Place based, local	Needs of local community, altruism of university (or self-interest?)	All activities of the university but especially including service provision

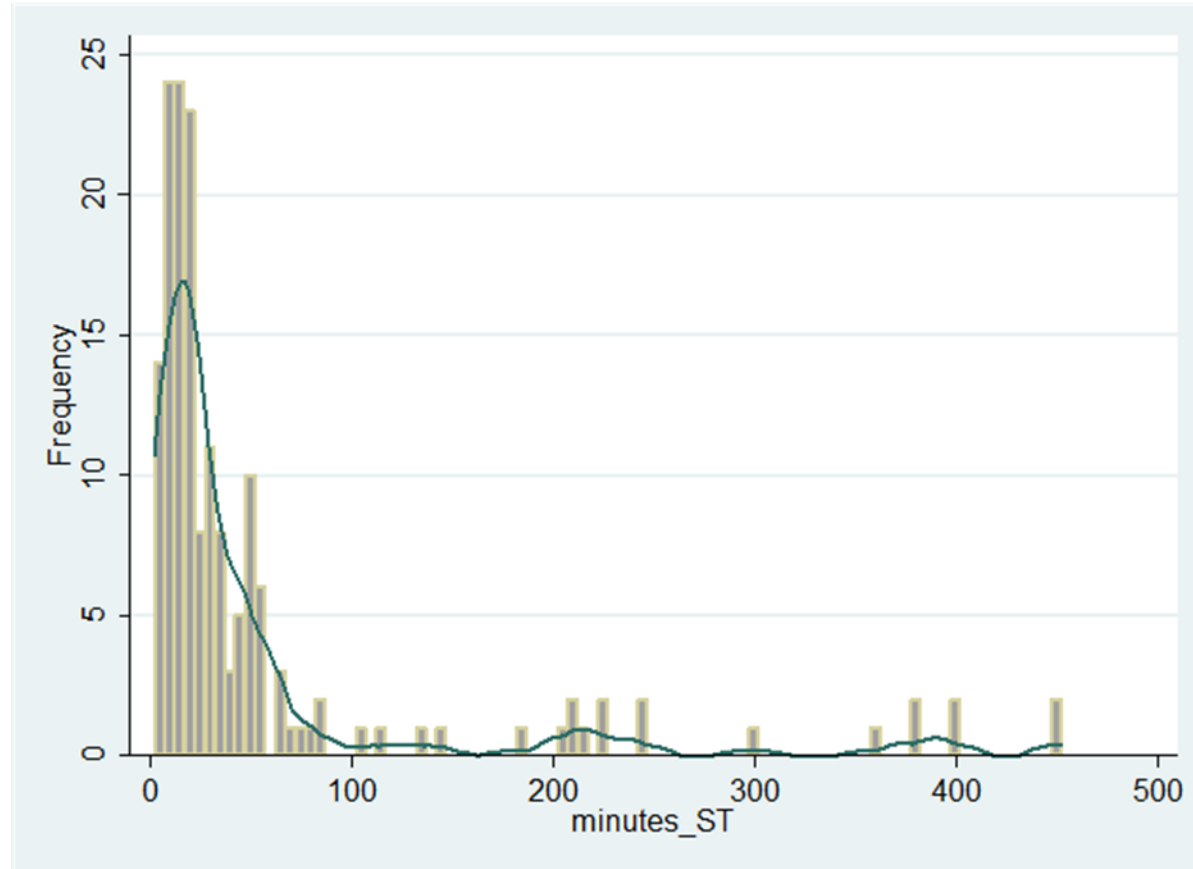
Not all university-business relations are the same

- Sophisticated firms seeking specific expertise – searching nationally and internationally, seeking international excellence, paying full costs or using (inter)national programmes
- Unsophisticated firms contacting or being approached by local universities – not sure what their problem is or who to contact, unwilling to pay full cost, unsure how to manage relationship, usually involved through regional development programmes
- The balance between the two depends on the research excellence of the university (Hewitt-Dundas, 2012)(1) and involvement of the university in regional strategies (Charles et al 2014)(2)

Different programme geographies

- Certain public programmes also have different needs in terms of proximity
- UK Knowledge Transfer Partnerships have requirements for frequent meetings and tend to be locally focused
- ERDF/LEP programmes are restricted to local areas
- National collaborative research programmes focus on excellence and have more long distance links
- EU H2020 projects require international partnerships so have limited domestic links

Travel time to partners in KTP projects at University of Strathclyde



UK context

- Highly stratified HE system – arranged into mission groups
- Basic research funding largely spatially blind, but support for industry and economic development has had a stronger regional and local basis
- Regional focus on uncontested, especially in South and especially where universities sat on regional boundaries
- Shift from strong regional system prior to 2010 to more local and voluntaristic approach, in England at least
- Little change in Scotland, Wales and NI
- New demands emerging from LEP system, smart specialisation, and now Industrial Strategy

Data

- Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS)
- National survey undertaken now by HESA annually with all HEIs in the UK. 100% response, data is fully available, no anonymity.
- Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Institutional five year Knowledge Exchange strategies – England only, c20 page statements from each HEI

Regional identification in 2001

	L/SE/E	WM/EM/ SW	NE/NW/ YH	S/W/NI	All
Regional/local area not of any significance to mission	9.8	3.3			4.3
Government region/RDA area	21.6	43.3	60.7	62.1	42.8
County	3.9	3.3	10.7	3.4	5.1
Locality - city, town or rural district	17.6		3.6	6.9	8.7
Area defined by the HEI (e.g. surrounding counties)	47.1	50.0	25.0	27.6	39.1
No. of cases	51	30	28	29	138

	Area greatest priority in the HE provider's mission							Total
Region of HEI	Region	Devolved government region	Local authority	locality	International EU	International other	Area defined by HEI	
East	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	90.0%	10
East Midlands	33.3%	0.0%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	44.4%	9
London	13.2%	0.0%	2.6%	18.4%	2.6%	18.4%	44.7%	38
North East	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	5
Northern Ireland	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	4
North West	28.6%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	64.3%	14
Scotland	16.7%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	27.8%	18
South East	15.8%	0.0%	5.3%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	73.7%	19
South West	38.5%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	46.2%	13
Wales	0.0%	62.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	37.5%	8
West Midlands	16.7%	16.7%	0.0%	8.3%	8.3%	0.0%	50.0%	12
Yorks/Humber	36.4%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	45.5%	11
All UK	18.0%	13.0%	3.7%	6.2%	1.2%	5.6%	45.5%	161

Are universities engaged in local regeneration programmes?

	Not engaged in regeneration programmes	Engaged	Total	% not engaged
East	4	6	10	40%
East Midlands	1	8	9	11%
London	22	15	37	59%
North East	0	5	5	0%
Northern Ireland	2	2	4	50%
North West	2	13	15	13%
Scotland	4	14	18	22%
South East	8	11	19	42%
South West	2	11	13	15%
Wales	0	8	8	0%
West Midlands	3	9	12	25%
Yorkshire	2	9	11	18%

Region of HEI	1. No engagement with community regeneration schemes, apart from individual efforts.	2.	3. Some representation of the HEP on local partnerships at senior management level, but with limited implementation capability.	4.	5. Active and creative engagement with community programmes, with the HEP taking a leadership position and applying a wide variety of resources
East	1	0	0	5	4
East Midlands	0	0	0	3	6
London	5	3	16	9	5
North East	0	0	0	0	5
Northern Ireland	1	0	1	2	0
North West	1	0	0	7	7
Scotland	1	1	1	5	10
South East	1	0	3	5	10
South West	0	1	2	3	7
Wales	0	0	1	2	5
West Midlands	0	0	0	4	8
Yorks/ Humber	0	0	0	4	7

Region of HEI	Adding/improving capability for teaching and learning (resource)	Adding/improving capability for research (resource)	Strengthening/facilitating links with the non-academic community	New/additional funds for teaching capital (buildings)	New/additional funds for teaching capital (equipment)	New/additional funds for research capital (buildings)	New/additional funds for research capital (equipment)	total
East	50%	83%	83%	33%	17%	17%	33%	6
East Midlands	75%	100%	100%	75%	50%	88%	100%	8
London	88%	94%	100%	19%	25%	13%	19%	16
North East	80%	100%	100%	60%	60%	40%	40%	5
Northern Ireland	0%	50%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	2
North West	85%	85%	100%	62%	54%	62%	62%	13
Scotland	79%	93%	86%	50%	29%	57%	64%	14
South East	82%	91%	100%	45%	64%	55%	45%	11
South West	73%	73%	100%	45%	36%	64%	73%	11
Wales	75%	100%	100%	38%	38%	75%	75%	8
West Midlands	56%	100%	100%	22%	33%	89%	67%	9
Yorks/ Humber	78%	100%	100%	22%	0%	67%	67%	9

Review of HEIF statements by universities

- Illustrate complexity of engagement strategies
- Variable geographies – local partnerships, LEAs, ‘old regions’, mega-regions, cross-regional sectoral partnerships
- International dimensions – driven by research and remote campuses
- Universities seem to be seeking partnerships that will help them with their own initiatives – science parks, incubators, sectoral centres etc
- Combining some sense of local responsibility as stewards of place with opportunity seeking neo-liberal institutions

University	Extract from statement on geography in HEIF plan
Durham	A key element of Durham’s KE strategy for this period is the increased emphasis on place and the role of the University as a “Civic Institution” within the locality of Durham City and the broader County Durham and north east region.
Exeter	<p>We will be focusing primarily on national and international sectoral communities although there will be specific interventions aimed at regional and very local communities, funded through bids to LEPs and ESIF leveraged by HEIF funding.</p> <p>We will develop a place-based focus which puts Exeter at the heart of a thriving innovation eco-system in the South West (primarily Devon, Cornwall and Somerset)</p>
Leeds	Our reach is international, national, regional and local. Partnership working is critical to our success and proactive alliances with current and future partners, where ever they are located, is a defining aspect of our KE strategy. <i>(Mentions local links in health and culture)</i>
Newcastle	<p>We are regionally based and rooted in the North-East of England, but strongly contend that a ‘civic university’ does not just mean being of relevance to our immediate region.</p> <p>The expansion of our academic footprint into Malaysia and Singapore has been carefully managed. Our next step will be to engage with the staff on both campuses to work alongside our HEIF funded activities to further develop our KE strategies,</p>
Southampton	As an engine for economic development both at a local and national level, the University is actively involved in business support networks and with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (Solent; EM3; Coast2Capital; Swindon & Wiltshire; Dorset; Thames Valley Berkshire) helping shaping the innovation and economic growth strategies.
Queen Mary, University of London	The variety of groups and organisations QMUL collaborates with are extensive, from multinational corporations to SMEs and micro-enterprises, along with social enterprises, public sector organisations, charities, community groups and NGOs. We have a wide range of target areas and vary the focus depending on the scale and scope of activity. Locally we prioritise small businesses through our student enterprise activity and community and schools engagement. Regionally we are well poised to take advantage of the wide variety of creative and industrial organisations that exist across the capital and in the South East (e.g. CreativeWorks, Tech City, MedCity).

Regional university partnerships

- N8 Research Partnership established in 2000s as part of Northern Way initiative - Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York.
- Midlands Enterprise Universities – Birmingham City, Coventry, De Montford, Derby, Lincoln, Nottingham Trent, Wolverhampton
- Midlands Innovation was launched in 2016 as an innovation-focused alliance between the 6 research-intensive universities in the Midlands: Aston, Birmingham, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham and Warwick.
- SETsquared partnership: Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Southampton, Surrey

Science and Innovation Audits

- The objective of the Science and Innovation Audits will be to enable the fuller use of existing data to:
 - Identify and validate areas of potential global competitive advantage across the UK;
 - Inform the development of the Industrial Strategy.
 - Increase access to and use of these datasets with the long term objective of developing a tool to inform the UK's future science and innovation strategies;
 - Provide an evidence base for strategic decision making on local innovation priorities;
 - Strengthen future bids for local investment, e.g. science capital bids, private sector, and other related funding;
 - Foster collaboration between universities and local businesses, local authorities and LEPs or their equivalents in the Devolved Administrations

Science and Innovation audit projects

- Wave 1
 - Edinburgh and SE Scotland
 - SW England and SE Wales
 - Sheffield City region and Lancashire
 - Greater Manchester and East Cheshire
 - Midlands Engine
- Wave 2
 - Bioeconomy of North of England
 - East of England
 - Enabling technology in Scotland's central belt
 - Innovation south
 - Medical technology in Leeds city region
 - Liverpool city region
 - Offshore renewable technology
 - Oxfordshire

Lincoln

- Perhaps unusually driven by local interests but one of a number of recent universities to be a response to local ambitions
- Sees itself as an anchor institution
- Partnerships with Siemens and Lincolnshire Cooperative Society
- Developing new science park with Coop and County
- Delivering Lincolnshire ERDF innovation programme on behalf of LEP
- Member of Midlands Enterprise Universities
- Identified as an exemplar in HEIF

Conclusions

- In England, shift away from dominance of 'regions' to a more complex geography of partnership and networks at multiple levels
- Less change in Scotland, Wales and NI
- Local partnerships with LEPs important for access to ERDF/ESF and UK government initiatives
- New research and innovation networks replacing regionally inclusive associations
- Also prioritisation of sectoral initiatives across regions to access support under new Industrial Policy
- Lower level of engagement in London and South East though