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## The CIT Extended Campus Model

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# THE CIT EXTENDED CAMPUS MODEL

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## Abstract

In 2006 the Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Ireland released a call for proposals under its Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF). The OECD review of higher education in Ireland had made a compelling case for reform of third and fourth level education in Ireland [1]. Over the following years, in the context of increasingly difficult economic circumstances, the Strategic innovation Fund became an important driver for investment and reform of higher education and contributed to the national discourse as well as to the practice and policy domain. One project funded under the Strategic innovation Fund was the Education in Employment project focused on ensuring that higher education can serve, in an efficient and meaningful way, the learning needs of those in the workplace, in a partnership model which recognises the role of the workplace itself as a valuable and valid centre for learning. Following from the Education in Employment project, and in consideration of a broader range of potential engagement with external enterprises, the Roadmap for Employment Academic Partnerships (REAP) project was proposed to the HEA with the intention of developing a blueprint to support a broad range of different interactions between Higher Education Institutions and employers. In recognising the breadth of engagement possibilities the project consortium developed a perspective on a partnership continuum which saw the possibility of academic-enterprise relationships ranging from mutual awareness to longer term strategic partnership similar to the 'Stairway Model to Strategic Partnership' described by Baaken and Schröder [2].

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 [3] stressed the potential for higher education to play a pivotal role in enhancing Ireland's economic competitiveness. The report also pointed to the need for greater engagement with wider communities in order to enhance equality in access to education and social cohesion. While the 'engagement' part of a HEI mission, encompassing the full range of external interactions with enterprises, individuals and communities, is often presented as distinct from the first two missions of Teaching and Research, it is only really effective if it is closely interlinked with them. Vorley and Nelles [4] describe this third mission as a 'thread that has the capacity to weave together teaching and research, while assuming a more economic and societal focus'. Adapting the learning derived from the SIF-funded projects the Cork Institute of Technology developed the CIT Extended Campus as a novel and unique response to embedding engagement within the entire mission of a HE institution and acting to support and professionalise the interface and collate business intelligence for all engagement activities in an integrated way across the institution.

Cork Institute of Technology's Extended Campus is a new facility designed to support the two-way interactions of individuals and organisations with the HEI (Higher Education Institution) for knowledge exchange, lifelong learning and responsive engagement. There is a wealth of world-class research, learning and facilities available within Higher Education Institutions but it is not always clear to companies, enterprises, individuals or communities how to access, interface, or contribute to this knowledge. The aim of the CIT Extended Campus is to support and give recognition to these contributions by facilitating and providing a platform for the sharing of knowledge in both directions and enhancing opportunities for engagement with private, public and not-for-profit organisations of all sizes.

Keywords: Engagement, higher education, partnership, collaboration, cooperation, knowledge exchange

## 1 HIGHER EDUCATION IN IRELAND

Higher Education in Ireland is provided by 7 Universities, 14 Institutes of Technology, and a number of Colleges of Education. Other smaller third level institutions provide specialist education within particular fields. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and development body for higher education and research in Ireland and it is the funding authority for the universities, institutes of technology and other designated higher education institutions. Of the almost 200,000 enrolments in higher education institutions, 87% are enrolled on undergraduate courses while the

remaining 13% are enrolled on postgraduate courses. In Ireland, as elsewhere, it is recognised that building relationships between enterprise and universities has the potential to deliver value for the students, the enterprise, the university and society as a whole. Building and growing the economy relies both on the ability to nurture and support indigenous Irish enterprise at start-up and growth phases, and to remain an attractive destination for leading multi-national corporations. With the pace of change in global economics, technological developments and the increasing globalisation of markets, it is clear that regional economic development and future skills needs can best be addressed through collaboration between higher education and the workplace yielding broader foundations of knowledge to facilitate the required adaptability and innovation of the workplace and the workforce and sustained employability as well as employment.

## **1.1 Developments in Irish Higher Education**

Ireland has a strong tradition of industry-academic partnership, illustrated in particular through the development in the 1970s and 1980s of a regional network of third level technical colleges established with a clear remit to provide vocational and technical education and training with particular reference to regional needs. The institutes' vocational and scientific orientation, as well as their mission to promote regional economic development, has contributed substantially to the development of the Irish economy in the subsequent decades. In addition, the seven universities in Ireland provide significant opportunities for engagement with enterprise and community development [5]. In more recent times the Higher Education Authority, through the development of agreed Mission-Based Performance Compacts with each higher education provider, has provided a framework for each institution to identify how it will contribute to national objectives from the position of its particular mission and strengths. The compacts provide for performance measurement in relation to the targets set over a three year period. The institutional compact is the mechanism through which the HEA and the individual institution agree on objectives as well as the criteria against which performance will be assessed [6]. An element of funding will be allocated on the basis of performance against key indicators.

Within each compact the institution in question sets out its development plans under seven particular subsections:

- Regional clusters
- Participation, equity of access and lifelong learning,
- Excellent teaching and learning and the quality of the student experience
- High quality, internationally competitive research and innovation
- Enhanced engagement with enterprise and the community, and embedded knowledge exchange
- Enhanced internationalisation
- Institutional consolidation

This process has ensured that each institution has reflected on their various contributions and set explicit targets in relation to these interactions and it does raise the question of how these targets can be measured and exemplified within a recording and reporting structure.

## **1.2 The Engagement Mission of Higher Education**

In 2011 the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland published its forward-looking document 'National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030' [3]. That document focused on restructuring the higher education system as a key action in ensuring Ireland's economic development and the creation of an 'Innovation Island'. The strategy document states that 'Engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the mission of higher education institutions'. The same document proposes the designation of some Institutes of Technology as Technological Universities and emphasises that the new universities should have 'very strong links with enterprise to create programmes informed by enterprise needs, co-taught by practitioners and academics, with constant renewal and change to ensure relevance... and ...a particular focus on meeting the national research agenda of supporting local and regional small and medium-sized enterprises'. In this context, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), in collaboration with the Institute of Technology Tralee, is in the process of seeking redesignation as a Technological University (TU). The vision is to establish, by 2017, the Munster Technological University (MTU) which will be a leader in defining the unique offerings of Technological Universities in Ireland. The unified institution will adopt a single coherent strategy based on the concept of the 'knowledge ecosystem'. This will be at the heart of the institutional culture. It will

integrate the key fundamental pillars of MTU: education, research and engagement. In essence, the boundaries of MTU will be permeable; extending into the community through its services and drawing on that community for its direction.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 emphasises the importance of the engagement dimension of the mission and role of higher education institutions. While anticipating that over the coming years the links and activities between higher education institutions and their local communities will be strengthened, it also points to the onus on higher education institutions to influence national and regional competitiveness and, through community partnerships, to progress equality and community development and further social innovation [3].

## **2 TYPES OF ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE INTERACTIONS**

The range of activities that can be considered as university-business, or university-enterprise interactions is broad and varied. In exploring the form that this type of engagement activity can take, some commentators focus on the science-based discovery and the development of new enterprises or the commercialisation of new products and other such activities which yield quantifiable indicators. This may have resulted in a concentration of effort in the realm of university business cooperation on those aspects which resulted in 'hard' outcomes such as spin-offs, licences and patents [7]. Other commentators include the provision of a workforce with relevant skills into the regional labour market as an important element of university-enterprise interaction, while others focus more on the community-based interactions including service learning, membership of boards and volunteering.

While there are many views on the potential range and codification of interactions there is a general agreement that there are significant benefits from these interactions, and that a wide range of external stakeholders can benefit by engaging with the knowledge, expertise, equipment and facilities of universities to address complex issues while engagement initiatives can shape university research agendas and greatly enhance student learning. In developing a view of the potential partnership interactions to be explored and developed through the REAP project consortium, the team considered the range of experiences of the higher education members and drafted a partnership continuum which saw the possibility of academic-enterprise interactions ranging from an initial mutual awareness to longer-term strategic partnerships [8].

These interaction possibilities included:

- Careers fairs and graduate recruitment events
- Co-operative education placement
- Company visits and guest lectures
- Part-time course provision and continued professional development offerings
- Course advisors and external examiners
- Recognition of experiential learning and work-based learning mentoring and support
- Undergraduate work-based projects
- Short research projects
- Sponsorship of academic, sporting and cultural activities
- Research and innovation proposal development and collaboration and joint publication
- Training and development strategic planning
- Long-term wide-ranging mutual commitment

More recently, through a comprehensive survey in collaboration with the European Commission over more than a year, a study on the cooperation between higher education institutions and public and private organisations in Europe was conducted [9].

This study identified eight types of cooperation between university and business as follows:

- Collaboration in R&D
- Mobility of Academics

- Mobility of Students
- Commercialisation of R&D results
- Curriculum development and delivery
- Lifelong Learning
- Entrepreneurship
- Governance

Through tracking of the nature of interactions sought by external organisations over a number of years, and an analysis of the types of interactions experienced in practice in Cork Institute of Technology, the range of potential interactions identified is further refined by the authors into three main categories or groupings proposed as follows:

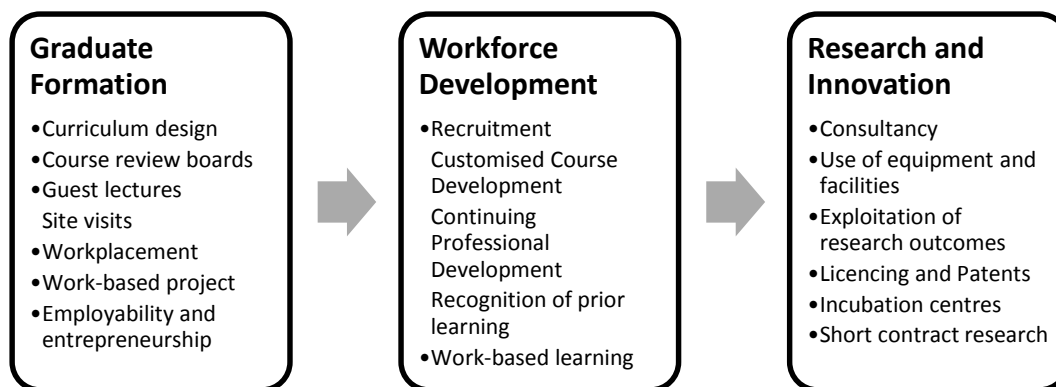


Figure 1 Types of interactions

This type of codification of interactions has proved useful in developing strategy interventions and in grouping activity reports. These are diverse activities which tend to involve a broad spectrum of staff within a higher education institution. As can be inferred from the activity categories suggested above, the units of a typical University involved in these interactions might include:

- Academic departments, schools and faculties,
- Careers offices
- Research units and centres
- Academic affairs and academic quality units
- Adult learning and continuing education units
- Technology transfer and commercialisation offices
- Alumni offices
- Buildings and estates offices
- Incubation centres
- Work placement or cooperative education offices

Within the usual higher education structure there are few, if any, threads that unite these disparate units of the institution and few opportunities for these units to combine their learning or business intelligence or reporting activities in an integrated manner. While the interactions with external agencies can, and do yield, significant benefits for the higher education institution and external agency alike, there is considerable advantage to be gained by combining the activities through what Goddard calls 'transversal mechanisms'

*Insofar as external engagement is taking place, the academic heartland is protected by specialist units dealing with technology transfer and continuing education. However the external engagement agenda... requires institutional responses, co-ordination and transversal mechanisms.* [10, p. 30]

### **3 SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIP INTERACTIONS**

While there is strong awareness of the potential for, and of, collaboration between higher education, enterprise and communities to contribute to economic renewal and social innovation this is often difficult to achieve, as the higher education institution can present a fragmented interface for the external organisation. Worse, the interface often comprises a confusing array of academic disciplines and acronyms representing research units and centres. For an external perspective it may appear that one's problem or opportunity statement needs to fit neatly into a particular academic discipline or field in order to interact with higher education.

There is a recognition that 'higher education institutions could be more dynamic and coherent in their approach to collaboration' [3, p. 75]. This view is echoed by Healy et al., who assert that ... 'despite the resurgence in business-university collaboration, research reports consistently find that cooperation practices are highly fragmented and uncoordinated, particularly when it comes to the educational offer' [7, p. 6]. This fragmentation can result in lack of consistency and coherence in developing relationships and interactions with enterprise.

Working closely with community and enterprise partners has always been an important part of Cork Institute of Technology's mission. This has included: ensuring that the curriculum is relevant and current for local regional and national employers, working in partnership with industry experts to develop applied research solutions and supporting new and exploring and responding to emerging workforce reskilling and upskilling needs. Despite having longstanding relationships with external organisations and employers, many of the interactions were conducted as separate, distinct activities with little overview of the totality of engagement interactions across the institution. Anecdotally, this situation led to Heads of Academic Departments passing each other in the car park of local multinational companies – neither knowing what the other one was doing there. This disconnected nature of the activity also meant that when one particular academic department or unit of the institution had a successful interaction with an enterprise organization, the knowledge was often lost to the organization as a whole and not used to build a broader strategic relationship or contribute to organizational learning or structures to stimulate or support more engagement.

### **4 EXTENDED CAMPUS MODEL**

Responding to this reality and seeking to enhance the practice and potential of external engagement interactions by changing the way we interact with, and are viewed by, enterprise partners, internal changes have been implemented in Cork Institute of Technology to seek to join up and maximize the benefits of an already actively-engaged institution. Ensuring that the institution does not just teach entrepreneurship or support entrepreneurs but collects and uses business intelligence to, itself, act entrepreneurially.

This objective of the restructuring was to:

- Make it easier for external organizations to engage in mutually beneficial interactions with CIT academics and researchers
- Develop a clear view of the extent and depth of existing and desirable engagement interactions to feed into institutional strategy and decision-making
- Stimulate more interactions and measurably support regional economic development
- Ensure that the variety of interactions with companies are collated and built on to develop broader supportive long-term mutually beneficial partnerships
- Support enhanced practice development by exploration of processes and sharing of good practices

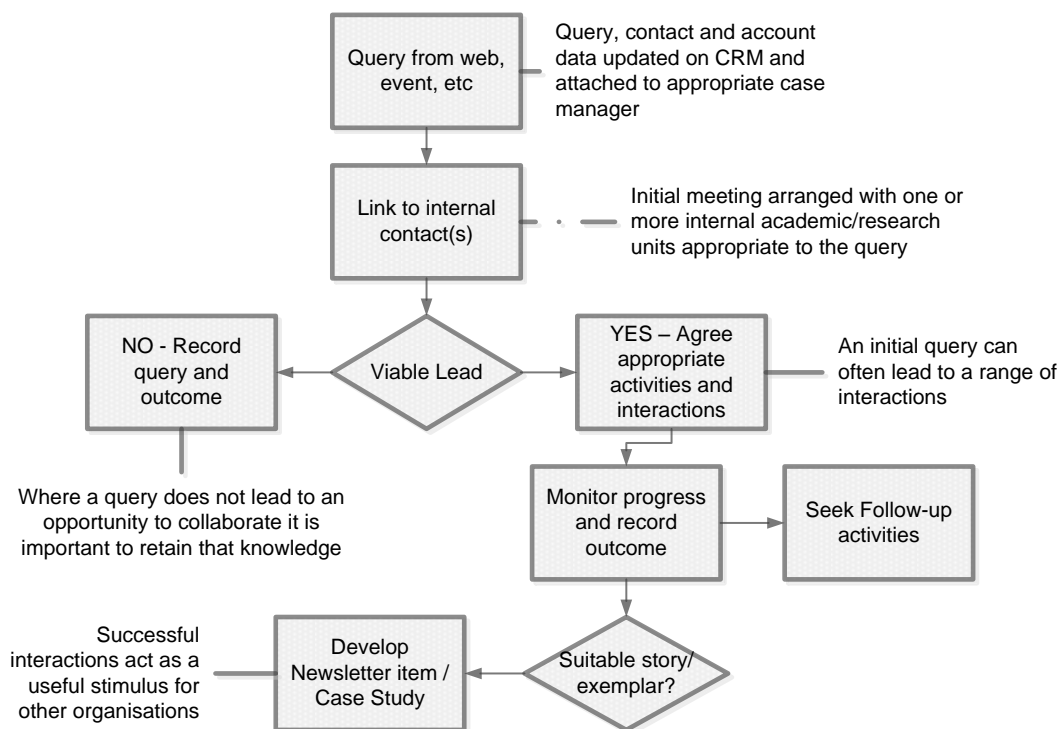
The CIT Extended Campus was developed and launched as an interface to support interactions with all of the various parts of the institution. CIT Extended Campus model built directly on the strategic importance of engagement for CIT, the knowledge, experiences and expertise gained through the

leadership of the REAP project and an exploration of practice internationally. The role of the Extended Campus is to facilitate initial needs analysis and consultation sessions for external organisations with a view to matching them with appropriate internal units and individuals. Following this initial phase the external organisation is introduced to the appropriate internal unit(s). At all stages in the interactions a customer relationship management system supports the collation of appropriate information and the compilation of information on queries and interactions provides a rich source of business intelligence for the strategic management of the institution.

The CIT Extended Campus seeks to stimulate the demand for interaction with higher education through publication of case studies or vignettes illustrating previous interactions including some exploration of the need or problem statement and the process involved in partnering with higher education to address the need. In each case a brief synopsis of the difficulty or opportunity and the enabling factors is presented. These case studies are chosen from a range of interaction types and across a range of external organisation sectors and sizes. Having stimulated the interactions and generated the queries, consideration must then be given to the process which will support these interactions through to resolution.

#### 4.1 Process Flow for Interactions

Supporting these interactions and ensuring that appropriate qualitative and quantitative information is collated for organisational learning, a customer relationship management (CRM) approach was adopted supporting the capturing and sharing of relevant information and the monitoring of progress of interactions recognising the varied nature, duration and extent of the interaction types. Fig. 2 indicates a simplified overview of a typical process flow in response to an external query.



**Figure 2 Process Flow for Engagement Interactions**

In addition to supporting the flow of interactions the CRM system also allows the generation of useful reporting formats which can provide timely information on such parameters as types of interactions, times to completion, and non-viable interactions.

## 5 BENCHMARKS AND METRICS

The growing importance of, and increased focus on, the external facing activities of higher education institutions has led to an emerging emphasis on the appropriate measurement or benchmarking structures. Work which seeks to recognise and value the contribution or impact of higher education on society and economy within regions both for the purposes of summative reporting and comparison and for strategic direction setting has contributed to the development of measurement or comparative frameworks. Quantifying impact through indicators such as licences, patent applications and such measures of commercialisation activity can support the demonstration of value. However this does lead to the danger of a lack of focus on the less easily quantifiable civic, social and cultural endeavours that form an important part of the overall higher education/societal interactions. Understanding the complex role of universities as social actors and the intended and unintended consequences of approaches to stimulating and measuring engagement activities, university management must also be aware of the varying capacity for external organisations to collaborate. The levels of autonomy, the varying missions of higher education institutions and the nature of the regions will ensure that external relationships are shaped by both history and geography [11].

Guerrero et al. provide a case study comparison between what is termed 'Entrepreneurial Universities' in Spain and Ireland using an in-depth qualitative approach [12]. The approach considers the environmental conditioning factors, the outcomes in terms of teaching, research and entrepreneurial activities and the outputs in terms of economic and social impacts. Recognising the changing role of higher education in society as well the challenges in recognising and measuring progress, the HEInnovate tool [13] has been developed as a useful self-assessment mechanism to support higher education institutions in assessing their own performance within a defined template under the following headings:

- Leadership and governance,
- Organisational capacity people and incentives,
- Entrepreneurship development in teaching and learning,
- Pathways for entrepreneurs,
- HEI – business/external relationships for knowledge exchange,
- The entrepreneurial HEI as an internationalised institution,
- Measuring the impact.

In their review of literature relating to the evaluation or auditing of university-community engagement Hart and Northmore report a very small number of publications making reference to specific evaluative or auditing tools [14]. Recommendations from their work include the importance of collecting meaningful data and the opportunities for organisational learning gained through sharing examples of practice internally between university units.

For Cork Institute of Technology, the CIT Extended Campus has contributed to the collation of information on a wide range of interactions with a view to providing empirical evidence on current interactions as well as informing the development of good practice guides and goal setting for future interactions. Some of these contributions would include:

- Development of a recognition of prior experiential learning data set and precedence database
- Collation of information on new contacts generated searchable by sector, by organisation size etc.
- Provision of information on new leads searchable by interaction type sought, by discipline etc
- Information on translation of leads into interactions

Additional metrics around the effectiveness of the dissemination channels for the entity include webpage visits, newsletter interactions and twitter interactions for example.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The complex and diverse roles of a university in society and the expectations surrounding the contribution that higher education can make, are the subject of much discourse and research. This consideration of the role is further complication within a structure where higher education is largely publically funded. Balancing the role of the university as a co-creator of knowledge, a supporter of the translation of knowledge into products and services, with excellence in teaching, cultural and civic contributions and responsiveness to challenging and often globally-influenced enterprise needs, is a



delicate task. Ensuring that the university also acts as a stabilising influence within the changing environment and as a public-space to support reflection can often present complex challenges.

Through a structure, which for the first time allows the opportunity to develop an integrated institute-wide view of existing and potential engagement interactions, Cork Institute of Technology has made a commitment to supporting and stimulating engagement with external partners in line with its strategy and mission and to developing organisational learning and business intelligence to inform that strategy.

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