

# UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER STRATEGY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. UCLan believes that teaching, research and knowledge transfer are mutually supportive and essential elements of a university. Its commitment to knowledge transfer and to the region and communities which the University serves is reflected in its Mission Statement and Medium Term Strategy. It further believes that the involvement of staff and students in knowledge transfer activity not only benefits business and society but also develops the capabilities of the individuals involved in such activity, whilst providing complementary support for teaching and research. UCLan believes that by focussing its expertise and strong partnerships on key regional economic needs, it can have a major effect on Lancashire, Cumbria and the North West region.
2. The UCLan Knowledge Transfer Strategy is based on four objectives:
  - to enable staff to maximise their contribution to the economic, social and cultural advancement of the region and to feed back the experience gained by knowledge transfer activities into their teaching and learning
  - to develop students who have the attitude, knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to thrive in the labour market and make a major contribution to the economy
  - to provide support to both staff and students seeking to establish commercially viable new enterprises and to use the University's expertise to support new enterprises
  - to ensure that research and knowledge transfer activities and support structures are developed with maximum synergy
3. To achieve its objectives, the University will develop knowledge transfer activity which meets the following three inter-linked requirements:
  - to build on UCLan's existing areas of strength and expertise, in terms of academic and knowledge transfer expertise
  - to align activity to the needs of the region, sub-region and locality, as evidenced by the Regional Economic Strategy and related documents
  - to develop the University's network of regional, sub-regional and local partnerships
4. Although the University expects every Department to engage in knowledge transfer as a core activity alongside teaching and learning, the University recognises the need to develop sustainable, specialist centres of excellence in knowledge transfer which will meet the criteria outlined in 3 above and which will enable business to access UCLan's excellence, thereby enhancing the University's reputation in the region. Accordingly, a priority for the Knowledge Transfer Strategy is the development of existing centres of knowledge transfer excellence and the creation of a small number of new sustainable centres.
5. The University will seek to provide opportunities for staff and students wishing to establish new commercially viable ventures. To facilitate this, it will provide enterprise training for staff and students through its Centre for Employability and will seek to facilitate access to incubation premises and seedcorn funding for new spin-out ventures.
6. The University recognises that the support of knowledge transfer activity and the centres of excellence will require a central support structure and is therefore creating a Knowledge Transfer Service to subsume the Business Services Office and to bring together support for knowledge transfer activity in a one stop shop, thereby making it easier for academic departments and their staff to conduct successful knowledge transfer.
7. The focus of the University's knowledge transfer activities will be the North West region and, in particular, the counties of Lancashire and Cumbria. It will therefore devote management time and resources to agencies and partnerships within Lancashire, Cumbria and the wider region. It will also endeavour to work closely with HEIs, FECs, local authorities and other agencies in the region. Its Knowledge Transfer Service will coordinate regional activities and act as a central source of regional information for all University staff.
8. UCLan has adopted twelve critical success factors against which it will judge the success of its knowledge transfer strategy.

## **1. THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AT UCLAN**

UCLan believes that teaching, research and knowledge transfer are mutually supportive and essential elements of a university. Its commitment to knowledge transfer and to the region and communities which the University serves is reflected in its Mission Statement and Medium Term Strategy. It further believes that the involvement of staff and students in knowledge transfer activity not only benefits business and society but also develops the capabilities of the individuals involved in such activity, whilst providing complementary support for teaching and research. UCLan believes that by focussing its expertise and strong partnerships on key regional economic needs, it can have a major effect on Lancashire, Cumbria and the North West region.

UCLan can only achieve the goals set out in its Mission Statement and Medium Term Strategy if it builds on the work done in the University in the last few years and succeeds in embedding knowledge transfer at the core of its academic activities alongside teaching and research. The strength and reputation of UCLan rest on the expertise of its staff and students. The University must endeavour to make that expertise available to the business and social communities which UCLan serves in a way which enhances those communities and the skills and expertise of the staff and students involved. It must also ensure that income from knowledge transfer activities can grow and feed back into the development of excellence at UCLan.

## **2. THE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER OBJECTIVES**

The UCLan Knowledge Transfer Strategy is based on four objectives:

- to enable staff to maximise their contribution to the economic, social and cultural advancement of the region and to feed back the experience gained by knowledge transfer activities into their teaching and learning
- to develop students who have the attitude, knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to thrive in the labour market and make a major contribution to the economy
- to provide support to both staff and students seeking to establish commercially viable new enterprises and to use the University's expertise to support new enterprises
- to ensure that research and knowledge transfer activities and support structures are developed with maximum synergy

The adoption of these four objectives will have a number of consequences for UCLan. To achieve the first objective, the University will need to encourage academic staff to become involved in knowledge transfer and/or research and to overhaul the support structures so that involvement in knowledge transfer by academic staff in all faculties and departments is facilitated. This will require a simplification of the current structures to provide a one stop shop support service and a simplification of the rules and overheads governing knowledge transfer work. Faculties and departments will need to embed the development of knowledge transfer in their academic strategies in a way which complements their research and teaching objectives.

To achieve the second objective, the University will need to develop its curriculum and opportunities for students to engage in work based learning in a way which raises the profile and importance of acquiring and using skills which will aid employability. It will need to ensure that there is an appropriate level of central coordination of work placement and learning through work activity to enable students and the University to gain the full benefit of such activity. It will need to market these attributes of its courses in a holistic way which develops the reputation of the University for developing a broad range of employment supporting skills in its students.

To achieve the third objective will require an infrastructure to support the creation of new businesses and to facilitate access to seedcorn and growth funding for such businesses. To complement this, UCLan will need to enhance the range of training available to staff and students in the skills and steps needed to develop successful new enterprises.

To achieve the fourth objective will require us to use our research strengths as the basis for knowledge transfer development and to ensure that two-way knowledge transfer feeds into our research. It will also require us to develop complementary and mutually supportive infrastructures for research and knowledge transfer.

Finally, UCLan will need to present the four objectives as being interlinked, mutually supportive and part of its vision for the future in which knowledge transfer sits alongside teaching and research at the centre of the University's academic strategy.

### **3. REQUIREMENTS FOR PRIORITISING KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER ACTIVITIES**

To achieve its objectives, the University will develop knowledge transfer activity which meets the following three inter-linked requirements:

- to build on UCLan's existing areas of strength and expertise, in terms of academic and knowledge transfer expertise
- to align activity to the needs of the region, sub-region and locality, as evidenced by the Regional Economic Strategy and related documents
- to develop the University's network of regional, sub-regional and local partnerships

To meet these requirements, sustainable knowledge transfer activities will need to achieve critical mass and to be developed alongside the teaching and research strengths of UCLan. The University will therefore seek to invest in the development of centres of excellence in knowledge transfer and/or research and will choose the areas for investment by assessing existing strengths and the regional and sub-regional economic needs for knowledge transfer in the areas of strength. The University recognises that to have economic impact will require the University to work in partnership with other educational institutions and economic agencies. It will therefore adopt a partnership strategy under which the University (and its faculties and departments) develop strong partnerships and networks which can form the basis of sustainable large scale knowledge transfer projects.

### **4. CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE**

Although the University expects every Department to engage in knowledge transfer as a core activity alongside teaching and learning, the University recognises the need to develop sustainable, specialist centres of excellence in knowledge transfer which will meet the criteria outlined in 3 above and which will enable business to access UCLan's excellence, thereby enhancing the University's reputation in the region. Accordingly, a priority for the Knowledge Transfer Strategy is the development of existing centres of knowledge transfer excellence and the creation of a small number of new sustainable centres, some of which may also be research centres of excellence as envisaged in UCLan's Research Strategy.

The University will always want to make available, market and sell individual short courses, pieces of consultancy, areas of expertise for commercial research, etc, but these are not the components which will help to build its reputation or create significant income or help UCLan to become a greater asset for the region or sub-region. For such benefits, UCLan needs to develop strong project-based capability which will frequently be multidisciplinary in nature and will involve multiple products targeted at, for example, economy sectors, involving multiple clients and funders. This will result in new centres (structural or virtual) in which expertise is brought together to meet the needs of the project or the external client. These centres of expertise will complement UCLan's departments and help the University to build its reputation and income. Achieving the development of these centres of expertise will require project management, marketing and networking skills as UCLan builds the projects and markets them to new clients and funders.

In the first instance, it is concentrating its resources on developing the following four centres, all of which meet the requirements set out in 3 above:

Centre for Ethnicity & Health (Faculty of Health)  
COMET (Centre for Outdoor Management, Education and Training at Penrith)  
Customer Service Management (based on Call North West in LBS)  
DIU (Design Innovation Unit in D&T based at Harris Knowledge Park)

In future, the University will look to develop other centres selected according to these requirements.

## 5. ENTERPRISE

The University will seek to provide opportunities for staff and students wishing to establish new commercially viable ventures. To facilitate this, it will provide enterprise training for staff and students through its Centre for Employability and will seek to facilitate access to incubation premises and seedcorn funding for new spin-out and spin-in ventures.

UCLan will therefore connect its existing Harris Knowledge Park (and Harris Knowledge Fund) activities to the departments and faculties of the University and will complement this with training for staff and students. It will work closely with regional and sub-regional agencies and other partners to provide premises, support and investment for those staff and students seeking to set up new enterprises.

## 6. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER SERVICE

The University recognises that the support of knowledge transfer activity and the centres of excellence will require a central support structure and is therefore creating a Knowledge Transfer Service to subsume the Business Services Office and to bring together support for knowledge transfer activity in a one stop shop, thereby making it easier for academic departments and their staff to conduct successful knowledge transfer.

- 6.1 The requirement to develop large scale projects involving combinations of products, multiple funding sources and multiple partners, has created a serious challenge for the infrastructure of the University. The University has therefore agreed to create a **Knowledge Transfer Service** to support the University and its faculties in the current economic environment. The Service will concentrate on product/project development and management; bidding, marketing and sales; and networking and facilitating partnerships amongst potential funders and clients whose needs it would also research. It will be a one-stop shop which will provide support to staff of the University but will also provide a clear focus geared to developing substantially the University's knowledge transfer activities.
- 6.2 The Service will provide capacity to support faculties to develop ideas and products into large scale fundable projects involving, as appropriate, expertise from elsewhere in the University or with partners, and then marketed to funders and clients in a way that draws on existing networks and partnerships which the Service has worked with faculties to create and grow. The Service will also need to facilitate the creation of project management capacity for all such major projects to ensure that pre and post contract work is achieved efficiently and on time with risk management procedures fully in place.
- 6.3 An implication of this set of priorities is that the Service will spend less time on direct marketing and sales of individual courses and pieces of consultancy than is currently expended by the Business Services Office. These will, however, continue to be made available and marketed by securing partnership agreements with other bodies. Accordingly, the Service will need to provide a central link to external organisations such as Knowledge North West, the Business Links, Chambers of Commerce, etc, through which we can market the products and expertise which we develop in faculties. Such links will also enable UCLan to attain improved market intelligence and reduce the need to conduct its own separate generic market research and intelligence activities. This sort of partnership approach will enable the University to streamline

its outward facing activities so that the Knowledge Transfer Service can act as a one-stop shop providing prompt responses to incoming enquiries seeking the services of the University and can provide central marketing of its products and projects either directly or through partnership approach. Finally, the Knowledge Transfer Service will provide a one-stop shop for internal clients so that invoicing, advice on legal and IPR issues, etc, can be handled centrally and efficiently. The close working between the Knowledge Transfer Service, its project managers and faculty staff will be essential if the Knowledge Transfer Service to succeed.

- 6.4 The breadth of activity covered by the Knowledge Transfer Service will need to extend into community outreach so that greater support can be given to student enterprise activities, sandwich placements and the work of the Millennium Volunteers and Centre for Employability. These will continue to be driven and delivered by faculties but networking, partnership and project development will be key aspects where the Knowledge Transfer Service can add value. Liaison with the University's Advancement service will be essential so that a coordinated approach can be achieved which maximises impact and effectiveness.
- 6.5 Similarly, the entrepreneurial support aspects currently delivered at Harris Knowledge Park will need to be drawn into the holistic approach to knowledge transfer so that they facilitate the development of new enterprises based on the ideas of University staff and students, whilst also creating placement opportunities that can enable the new enterprises and the University to operate with synergy.
- 6.6 The University's Knowledge Transfer Partnership office, which is based in its Faculty of Design & Technology, already has national accreditation. The Knowledge Transfer Service will need to ensure that the support of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (previously Teaching Company Schemes) fits into the overall support structure.
- 6.7 The Knowledge Transfer Service will also have a key regional role as so much of the knowledge transfer agenda is regional. The Service will oversee the University's regional activities; will ensure that important regional developments are surveyed and fed into University strategies and action plans; and will ensure that UCLan is locked into the decision making structures of the key regional bodies. UCLan already has excellent involvement at a senior level but needs to see this reflected more at officer level through the new Knowledge Transfer Service.
- 6.8 The responsibility of the Knowledge Transfer Service for research support and/or liaison with other research support structures in faculties or centrally will be clarified by the end of 2004.

## **7. PARTNERSHIP AND THE REGION**

The focus of the University's knowledge transfer activities will be the North West region and, in particular, the counties of Lancashire and Cumbria. It will therefore devote management time and resources to agencies and partnerships within Lancashire, Cumbria and the wider region. It will also endeavour to work closely with HEIs, FECs, local authorities, NWDA and other agencies in the region. Its Knowledge Transfer Service will coordinate regional activities and act as a central source of regional information for all University staff.

The success of the University depends heavily on the success of the North West region in general on the success of the counties of Lancashire and Cumbria in particular and on the development of thriving and dynamic locations for its campuses in Preston, Penrith and possibly Carlisle. It will therefore look to develop close links with partnership bodies in Preston, Penrith, Carlisle, Lancashire, Cumbria and the North West. It will develop its knowledge transfer activities in partnership with Business Links and Chambers of Commerce so that it can direct its activities towards real economic needs and work with these partners to market the University's expertise. Its aim will be to establish UCLan as the major centre for knowledge transfer in the region and the sub-regions it serves and to develop a reputation for excellence in the way in which it applies its expertise.

## 8. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

UCLan has adopted twelve critical success factors against which it will judge the success of its knowledge transfer strategy:

- to develop the Knowledge Transfer Service as a one stop shop, providing expertise and administering simplified processes by the end of 2004
- to develop knowledge transfer strategies in each faculty by March 2005
- to develop the four centres of knowledge transfer excellence, with clear targets and promotional materials by the end of 2004
- to develop plans for four new centres of knowledge transfer excellence (involving all five faculties) with external funding by summer 2005 for launch in 2005/06
- to conclude partnership agreements with the Business Links and Chambers of Commerce on the marketing of UCLan's knowledge transfer activities by the end of 2004
- to develop strong partnership links with the HEIs, FECs and economic partnerships in Preston, Penrith, Carlisle, Lancashire and Cumbria to facilitate its development plans
- to ensure that UCLan continues to play a leadership role in key economic bodies in Lancashire and Cumbria
- to increase the number of academic staff involved in knowledge transfer work by 25% per annum for each of the next two years
- to increase the number of students and staff undertaking enterprise training to ??? and ??? by the end of 2004/05
- to double the number of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships by the end of 2005
- to increase the income from knowledge transfer from £8million in 2003/04 to £10million in 2004/05 and £12million in 2005/06
- to establish a Knowledge Transfer Committee to oversee progress on the strategy and the critical success factors above

In developing action plans to achieve the above critical success factors, attention will be given to ensuring synergy with the University's Research Strategy and its action plans.