Development of a single knowledge exchange office
Response from The Open University in Scotland
October 2012

1. Is the remit of the national policy forum correct?
The Open University in Scotland believes that the proposed remit for the national policy forum looks appropriate.

2. What membership should the forum have to deliver this remit?
The forum should have membership from key representatives from industry and NGOs, local enterprise agencies, Universities Scotland, HEIs, TSB and other funders, including the SFC.

3. What functions might usefully be included in a system of national support to be delivered by Interface?
Producing a list of the resources and capabilities within the network so that these can be shared and best practice spread.

For which additional functions could the sector share expertise to enhance engagement with industry?
The sector could link up with KTP centres to run joint promotional events and awareness raising events, as well as good online support systems.

4. Do ILGs provide sufficient coverage of the business base to meet the objectives for sector streams? If not, are there other collective industry bodies that the SFC should engage with to carry out this role?
ILGs cover the business base, but not local authorities or other public sector bodies such as NHS.

5. Where there is existing knowledge exchange infrastructure focussed on an industry sector how might this be co-ordinated under a national sector strategy?
Existing KE infrastructure focused on a particular industry sector should be co-ordinated under a sector KE director.

6. For industry sectors where there is currently an inadequate knowledge exchange infrastructure, how might this be developed on a collaborative basis in the context of limited public funding?
Specific engagement is required with industry and with the public sector to establish what the gaps are in current provision and to provide recommendations.

Additional Comments
The Open University in Scotland is in favour of harmonising systems and approaches across the sector to establish further linkages between academia and industry, and
to help simplify the academic landscape for business. However, it is important that the proposed changes will enable HEIs to build on their existing strengths.

Key success factors for the single KE structure, once established, will be maintaining relationships between academics and KE, as well as improved access and stronger engagement with SMEs.

While there are clear advantages in sharing expertise and services around local best practise, HEI engagement with NGOs is classically encouraged on a competitive basis which needs to be considered.

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