



JISC BCE Consultation Workshop Series 2008/2009 Report

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1. Background and context

Definition

Business and Community Engagement (BCE) is the strategic management by higher and further education institutions of relationships with external partners and clients, and of the associated knowledge exchange and workforce development services. In terms of institutional strategic missions, Business and Community Engagement constitutes the Third Mission, alongside teaching and research.

Objectives

The objective is to deliver benefits to the economy and society and enrich the institutions themselves, resulting in a more highly skilled workforce, a more efficient, dynamic and sustainable economy and a more cohesive, knowledge-enabled society.

About the BCE programme's remit

BCE includes knowledge transfer and exchange as well as innovation and employer engagement. These are themes high on the government's agenda, reflected by Innovation Nation, the Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-14 and several key reviews including those by Sainsbury, Leitch and Foster, all of which are drivers of national policy. BCE enables institutions to rise to the challenges presented by these programmes and review recommendations, and in doing so to contribute to innovation, economic prosperity and enhanced quality of life.

BCE is fundamentally about solving problems and creating opportunities through external engagement, and the strategic management of the resulting interactions, partnerships and transactions. It includes both research-based and education-based services, and typically constitutes knowledge and expertise-based services such as consultancy, CPD, regeneration or commercialisation of research. It aims to engage with employers, just as those working on the learning and teaching side do. Effective BCE requires institutions to be responsive to external demand and alert to opportunity, and to have the infrastructure, enterprise culture and capability to make an impact in this field.

Knowledge Transfer (KT) and Employer Engagement

The Government promotes knowledge transfer in its Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2010-14 (SIIF) and supports it through instruments like the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) (about £700m in England since 2000), Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, working with and through major national agencies like the technology Strategy Board and the funding bodies. Each of the devolved administrations has policies and schemes focused on knowledge transfer, and the European Commission promotes it in a number of ways, including through its Innovation work, its Research Directorate-General and networks such as ProTon.

Under the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), and its successor Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), the research, innovation and skills agendas have been brought

together. The Employer Engagement agenda is being taken forward by this integrated department, and is driven by the Leitch Review ambition that more than 40% of the 19-65 age population should have attained level 4 qualifications by 2020. Employer engagement requires the demand-driven, business-like, client-focused practices of the knowledge transfer agenda and aims to increase skills, widen participation through a co-funding model with business, and develop the workforce.

How BCE works within JISC

As BCE is a cross-cutting agenda (sponsored by the JISC Joint Organisational Support committee), which JISC is committed to integrating into its core activities, an increasing number of JISC Innovation programmes and Advisory and Innovation Services contribute towards BCE strategic objectives.

Following a number of needs analysis activities and studies¹, consultation through the committee, a working group, and then the BCE Advisory Group, plus informal consultation with stakeholders, the JISC Executive developed a structured, strategic BCE programme composed of the following six streams:

1. Enhancing Knowledge Management:

Supporting institutions in sustainable systems and ICT strategies for management and exploitation of knowledge assets.

2. Facilitating Collaboration:

Enhancing collaboration and provision of service across and between institutions through enabling systems and technology.

3. Enabling Change, Enabling BCE:

Supporting institutions in making the process and technological changes (driven by strategic goals) to sustain efficient, effective BCE.

4. Enabling the Interface (Institution/BCE partner):

Richer and more efficient, productive knowledge exchange and learning partnerships between institutions and BCE partners.

5. Embedding and Communicating BCE:

To ensure internal change and education within JISC with the aim of embedding BCE in its operations, development and Services.

6. Needs Analysis and Evaluation:

An understanding of the needs of the BCE community and its partners and an understanding of the impact of the investment as it unfolds.

JISC's aims, through the BCE programme, are two-fold: to enhance institutions' efficiency, effectiveness and opportunities in BCE and to help institutions overcome the barriers to access to institutional knowledge assets for business and community organisations. For the former, JISC aims to facilitate synergy between strategies, processes and systems in institutions, to enable BCE functions to be better connected to other key internal functions such as information management and administration. For the latter, JISC aims to support institutions in opening up institutional assets and knowledge for wider benefit, whilst managing risks and securing controls to create internal benefit. JISC works with and through a range of partners and stakeholders to ensure compatibility of plans and breadth of impact.

The external partners

The scope of engagement for BCE is wide. It includes:

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JISC Business and Community Engagement

- the commercial sector, both large companies and SMEs;
- the public sector, including charities and trusts;
- the cultural landscape (arts and cultural organisations);
- the social and civic arena.

All institutions undertake BCE across this scope of engagement, but the exact mix and the resulting services deployed depend on institutional strategies and strengths.

JISC also works with a range of key stakeholders through its BCE programme, including HEFCE through their Employer Engagement (Workforce Development programme) and Business and Community themes.

2. BCE Consultation Workshops 2008/2009

a) Aims and Objectives of the Workshop Series

The aim behind these invitation-only workshops was to explore the key concerns of both further and higher education institutions and their partners and clients regarding collaboration, and the promotion of and access to UK institutions' range of resources and services. The focus throughout was on how process improvements, technology and information management can support key BCE themes, to inform the JISC BCE strategy going forward.

The first workshop, Key Concerns of the Demand Side, took place at the Said Business School in Oxford on 29th October 2008 and explored the top concerns of universities' and colleges' actual and potential partners and clients from intermediaries, business and the community.

The second workshop, Supporting BCE - The Key Concerns of Institutional Business and Community Engagement Practitioners, took place at the Oxford Centre on 10th December 2008 and explored institutional BCE practitioners' top concerns with regard to supporting, managing and delivering services to external clients and partners.

The third and final workshop, Enabling Productive Collaboration, took place on 4th February 2009 at the Oxford Centre, and brought together delegates from both further and higher education institutions and those from business and community organisations to address the issues raised in the previous two sessions, to explore common challenges and work together on possible solutions. This third workshop was intended to be the most interactive of the three, as participants worked together on putting forward possible solutions to specific challenging scenarios that could be faced in the future.

b) About the workshops

Workshop 1 - Key Concerns of the Demand Side

The participants in this workshop were from representatives the "demand side" of BCE – intermediaries, businesses, SMEs and other external partners.

They discussed the key issues facing customers and partners over the next five years, highlighting unskilled graduates, financial problems, business development staff being viewed with suspicion by academics, and the lack of understanding between different types of organisation. The varying understandings of what constitutes innovation were also explored.

There was a consensus that many businesses were unaware of the services and resources offered by HE and FE institutions, and if they were aware of them, they did not know how to access them (indeed, sometimes access to resources is prohibited to those outside academia). SMEs felt that the "top" universities were uninterested in working with them, and it was generally felt that universities' response time was much slower than would be expected in the business world.

Ultimately, the group concluded that there was a perceived lack of common ground between the supply side and the demand side, and there were significant differences between the business world's needs and the predominantly student-focussed delivery of institutions. For BCE services,

it was felt that a lack of consistency meant that finding information varied from institution to institution, both in locating resources and contacting the right expert.

There are a wide range of online tools businesses and other external organisations are using for collaborative purposes, ranging from Google Docs to wikis to Twitter. Potential hindrances from a BCE perspective included security concerns (organisational firewalls) and not deploying the most appropriate processes and tools to support the business need and engagement dynamic.

Workshop 2 - Supporting BCE - The Key Concerns of Institutional Business and Community Engagement Practitioners

The day was attended by around 30 delegates, and opened with a welcome and keynote from Di Martin, Chief Information Officer at the University of Hertfordshire and chair of the JISC advisory group.

Simon Whittemore, JISC's BCE programme manager, gave an overview of what BCE is and how JISC encourages it. He said JISC's approach to BCE is not about dictating what relationships between universities and businesses should be like, but rather enhancing institutions' BCE, and improving access to institutions' knowledge assets for business and community external partners.

The workshop participants gave their own thoughts on what they thought the barriers to BCE were, which included: individuals and departments not understanding the benefits of sharing; the wish for RAE credits to acknowledge BCE work; geographical location limiting a university's external engagement work and the businesses it has access to; and businesses not knowing how to approach universities.

The afternoon began with breakout sessions, running along two themes –

- 1) Internal engagement and BCE advocacy with institutional support functions and institutional training and development policies and opportunities for BCE practitioners;
- 2) The civic engagement agenda exploring the business case and how institutions respond to clients at different speeds.

After feedback from the sessions had been collated and discussed, Di Martin took the floor again to invite the workshop attendees to come up with what they'd like to see JISC taking forward. Suggestions included a BCE national community of practice, guidance on data management, maintenance of CRM, and metrics.

Workshop 3 - Enabling Productive Collaboration

This day drew together the issues about BCE that had been raised by institutions and partners in the previous two workshops, and allowed attendees to discuss those ideas and put forward their own suggestions – particularly on how JISC could take account of BCE needs when devising their long-term strategy.

After a welcome from Simon Whittemore, Rob Allen of JISC introduced the group to ten issues that had been brought up in the previous sessions –

- access to resources,
- agility and responsiveness,
- applying benefits of BCE to other institutional areas,
- BCE-ICT community of practice,
- customer relationship management,

- collaborative service provision,
- data management,
- developing BCE capability and capacity,
- marketing,
- metrics.

These issues – and more that had not already been mentioned, such as the role of the broker, communication, managing cultural shifts, incentives to engagement, course validation, strategic leadership and business modelling – were fiercely debated.

Delegates spent the afternoon talking about the ways in which JISC could strategically assist institutions and partners in particular scenarios – accessing resources, institutional agility, managing data and marketing of services. The participants were divided into four groups and each given one problem / scenario to examine and discuss; then one representative took the questions raised and proposed approach to one of the other groups and requested their suggestions and solutions before taking the feedback to their original group. Feedback confirmed that this was a really valuable exercise in collaborative problem-solving, addressing specific real-life scenarios to put context into some of the top-level issues raised.

c) Generating a BCE-ICT community of interest

This process of creating closer links between BCE participants and those working in the traditional JISC community of ICT was stimulated through the series of workshops. Better communication and BCE awareness will lead to greater understanding, and the potential strategies to encourage this community and its expected outcomes will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

3. Key issues and concerns

a) Business and Community facilitators, intermediaries and organisations (workshop 1)

Identifying the key issues

Delegates discussed some of the key issues being faced by businesses and other partner organisations over the next few years. They included:

- graduates leaving further and higher education without the right skill set to succeed in business. Delegates suggested that higher education is too academically biased, and that universities do not know what is required by companies, because the staff skills in the sector are not up to date and do not match industry standards. It was also suggested that schools do not teach the right skills either, and that workplace skills need to be introduced at secondary school level. Because of the rapid expansion of higher education, the resources in the sector have not been apportioned appropriately, and there is a proliferation of very specialist courses where the opportunities for employment after graduation are limited (for example, animation studies). The UK is now producing many graduates but not people with vocational qualifications at the level of technician, HND, apprenticeships and so on.
- financial problems impacting on organisations' operations in the light of the imminent recession;

- a downturn of innovation outside of the higher education sector;
- SMEs seeking to make a profit but needing expert knowledge and guidance to fully achieve this objective;
- businesses and local communities seeking access to educational resources held in university libraries, and requiring a broker to introduce them to the services on offer;
- a reduced access to capital to fund operations;
- the need for a speedy response to requests;
- a willingness to take risks in a precarious financial environment.

Innovation

Delegates were asked to discuss the term “innovation” and what it means in different contexts, and suggestions included:

- Innovation should be at the heart of any strategy;
- Innovation is essential for survival;
- Innovation means many different things - including the exploitation of ideas, market differentiation and economical value - to different people,
- FE colleges have varying interpretations of innovation ;
- A more conclusive definition of innovation may be helpful,
- In the public sector, failure is seen as a bad thing. A culture change needs to take place so that it is acceptable to fail as important lessons can be learnt;
- Trying different things for your business to see what works and what does not work;
- Collaborative procurement at national levels, such as in libraries;
- A new combination of knowledge and skills for new markets.

Accessing resources and encouraging engagement

Delegates pooled ideas about the resources and services offered by further and higher education institutions, and then discussed ways in which external partners could access them.

Some potential barriers to successful and effective BCE engagement that were discussed included:

- the need for a shared concept of innovation;
- the need for institutions to respond swiftly to business requests;
- the need for greater understanding between different types of organisation;
- the need to promote the availability of resources at universities, both in terms of research facilities and expertise;
- the need for institutions to understand the value of marketing and market segmentation. The experience of the customer was discussed in this first workshop, and it emerged that much contact between institutions and business is still initiated through personal contacts and the trust that ensues from that relationship, rather than through the marketing of specific, targeted services for the customer. Participants agreed that while trust is always a key factor, there was often no way of building this with businesses who have no idea that a given institutional service is good nor indeed that it exists, having neither used it or been made aware of it. This issue was also discussed at the other workshops, and will be addressed later in this report.

b) BCE Practitioners in institutions (workshop 2)

Key issues

The key issues for effective and efficient BCE for institutions included –

- communication problems between different sections of the university, and between the university and businesses, including misperceptions about the way universities work;
- the need to embed BCE in universities' practices;
- enabling businesses to access universities' services easily;
- the possibility of promoting technology transfer through civic engagement, social responsibility and academic secondments;
- the imperative for institutions to understand the customer's needs;
- the need for institutions to become more business-like, and approach businesses rather than waiting to be approached. This was also mentioned when the barrier of answerphone menus was discussed. It was felt that an institution's speed of response depended largely on the individual engaged with the project;
- promoting appropriate skill-sets to encourage BCE through provision of training, the need for some very specific and specialised skills and the need for customer-focused institutional services;
- the limitations of technology and the need for a good broker to link people and organisations together;
- the possibility of institutions outsourcing or contracting in, in order to deliver projects efficiently and enabling more professional delivery of projects and not engage those internal individuals unsuited to the work.

Cross-institutional collaboration

One strong theme emerged over the course of discussions – that the benefits of BCE can be applied to all institutional areas. Participants exchanged experiences of the positive aspects of BCE and discussed the need to make these more apparent to other internal staff such as libraries, IT/IS, procurement, marketing and estates. Benefits of an institution-wide approach to BCE might include increased efficiencies, moving out of silos, better cost and resource management, new opportunities for services (content, research, library, information management) and facilities (estates and equipment), for cross-selling and for enhanced reputation and prestige, potentially increasing student numbers. One idea that emerged was the possibility of briefing internal staff such as IT directors and librarians in order to raise awareness of BCE and of the related benefits and opportunities.

Time-limited funding to encourage excellence through research, knowledge transfer (Centres for Knowledge Exchange) and teaching collaborations (Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning) was often seen as a premium for collaboration, despite the terms associated with such funding. Some institutions have been wary of exploring / slow to explore the business benefits of collaboration with other institutions. Employer engagement and workforce development approaches, foundation degrees and Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) have shown that response to regional and sectoral economic requirements is often best met through collaborative provision. Participants agreed that a linked-up approach is required from institutions so that, for example, if one university cannot provide what an external organisation is looking for, they should be able to provide a relevant contact or list of other institutions who do have the required expertise. JISC Innovation projects do frequently encourage collaboration (including between HE and FE) and are entirely based on the premise that outputs and benefits should be made

available for the whole sector; but the impact of this funding in the sector is relatively small compared to the major funding streams.

CRM

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) emerged as one of the most important needs in the second workshop, with a consensus that of those institutions who have adopted a CRM solution, very few have had a positive experience, and very few identified the processes that such a solution would support or enable, not to mention agreed and implemented and communicated the policies which would ensure the processes were efficient, consistent and adhered to.

Over the course of the three workshops, consensus emerged that institutions are often unsure of how best to manage data, and what the legal requirements are, particularly since the introduction of the Data Protection Act. Participants requested JISC's assistance in providing guidelines on how to handle and store data, and on contributing to metrics by enabling effective analysis and reporting across institutions. This will be addressed later.

Developing BCE capability, capacity and business operating standards

Workshop participants noted that BCE is still very much a peripheral concern in some institutions, with BCE roles not sufficiently identified, rewarded and developed. Visible support and advocacy from senior management team was seen as critical in improving this. Few institutions have integrated BCE roles into mainstream HR and recruitment and retention policies, though there is considerable activity under way to tackle this.

Marketing

There was consistent agreement across the workshops that marketing for BCE is an area in which institutions are often very under-developed. Most central marketing functions are focused on prospective students and there is little connection between BCE operations and central marketing, which amounts to a significant weakness and a missed opportunity, especially if considering the range of BCE activity undertaken across institutions. Identification of unique selling points is an essential first stage in the marketing process for institutions, and participants offered 'impartiality' as key among these; an institution's lack of stakeholding and vested interest in external bodies and organisations is something which differentiates institutions from businesses and representative bodies.

Market segmentation and the process of identifying one's market was also recognised as a critical but much under-used process. This is certainly not restricted to transactional, revenue-generating BCE activity. Even if the target market in question is entirely public sector or community-based, its needs, demographic and characteristics need to be carefully identified before the project commences, otherwise the deployment of effort and resource to manage the response and deliver the service will fail.

Metrics

The dual drivers behind measuring long-term impact and setting benchmarks for future work are:

- the need to regularly report to funders and government agencies on performance and statistics (HE-BCI and HESA);

- the need to provide intelligence for senior management to enable effective decision-making and strategic review.

It has been suggested that a third objective should be added - to gain external recognition of performance, quality and value by making the evidence available. In doing so, an institution could gain recognition of the quality of their processes, similar to charter-mark status. The Training Quality Standard, used at the moment mainly in further education settings, is a powerful means of demonstrating and assuring quality of service and delivery, and would be of great value in higher education, not least since attaining it involves, amongst other activities, a comprehensive process audit.

It is only to be expected that the policymakers and stakeholders involved in facilitating BCE activities want to be able to identify their impact, but there are different aspects to measure for different activities, meaning that different metrics need to be devised and employed. For services to businesses in the private sector, one might measure growth or sustainability; for businesses in the public sector, one might measure efficiency; and for community engagement, one might measure resources and opportunities. Nevertheless, workshop participants agreed that one principle is common to most BCE areas - measurements need to be taken and impact assessed over the long term as real end-user benefits often emerge some years later.

This is particularly true of public and community engagement, with its subsequent benefits such as social cohesion or enhanced educational prospects. However, it is also the case with more transactional activities such as IP licensing, which often do not reveal their returns for as much as ten years. A long-term view can help demonstrate the relative effectiveness of an activity; formal technology transfer and research commercialisation processes, beginning with the filing of patents, were measured and advocated for many years because they were thought to generate significant revenue. Now, even the leading technology transfer institutions in the United States are coming to the conclusion that the expected levels of financial returns from these activities have not materialised, and that income generation can be more profitably pursued through a more business-focussed approach, which in the US this is heavily dependent on institutional development officers and ensuing private fundraising and investment through activities like lifelong alumni engagement and business sponsorship. This shows the need for a long-term and 360 degree view.

Returns also need to be perceived and valued in non-financial terms. These might include:

- reputation;
- prestige;
- increased student numbers;
- alumni relations bringing business opportunities.

For instance, an institution enjoying a trusted position as the impartial expert in a productive partnership with a local authority, business representatives and cultural groups is likely to occupy a solid foundation in its locality, bringing business sustainability through being continuously involved in supporting and enhancing the local economy and society and a reliable stream of students. Of course, such an institution can never stand still. It needs to build strategic partnerships outside of its locality reflecting its expertise, and as has been shown it must seek to engage new groups of students as the demographics and funding models change.

c) Consensus - key themes and messages emerging (workshop 3)

There were ten key themes that JISC BCE identified prior to the start of this workshop. Several of these will be addressed in more detail in later sections.

- **Access to resources for BCE**
Universities and colleges have a lot of resources internally, and it is possible that they

could be made available more widely. The question for consideration was whether external organisations should have access to this information, and if they did, whether it would be useful to them due to possible jargon barriers, as it had been originally produced for an academic audience.

- **Agility and responsiveness**
Institutions are sometimes accused of being slow to react to business needs because the bureaucratic system makes it difficult to respond.
- **Applying benefits of BCE to other institutional areas**
Institutions may be able to benefit by using BCE models and principles of practice across the board.
- **BCE-ICT community of practice**
It has been suggested that there is currently little interaction between people delivering activities in institutions and the more traditional JISC communities such as IT services and librarians. It is possible that there are overlaps between the two areas, and they could work closer together.
- **CRM**
Customer relationship management remains a big part of the programme and continues to be a major area for discussion and progression, not just the tool itself but the business processes behind its development. It can be difficult for institutions to integrate a variety of services and the majority of the client-facing units into a single consistent operation, but it will be a challenge that needs to be taken on in order to satisfy the expectations of the community, businesses and employers.
- **Collaborative service provision**
It was suggested that a “culture of collaboration” may not exist within or between institutions, which do not have infrastructures flexible enough to allow any kind of working together, or hierarchies which understand the benefits of shared efforts.
- **Data management**
Data becomes increasingly complex when institutions branch out into different areas of activity. Even if different departments of the same institution are working in the same fields, that does not necessarily mean they share their data, nor even that they collect and store it in the same way. The issue of the Data Protection Act is important – few within academia understand their legal obligations when it comes to processing information, whether it is held electronically or not.
- **Developing BCE capability and capacity**
As BCE is a relatively new area, it is possible that within many institutions it is not fully integrated into the organisation, and remains a peripheral part of the institution’s work. Further support from HR and increased staff development so that those working in BCE fully understand their roles may be needed.
- **Marketing**
Again, the relative novelty of BCE may mean that it is not included in institutions’ central marketing plans, which tend to focus on bringing students in as customers.
- **Metrics**
It is vital to measure activities’ outputs and impacts, and feed the results back to the involved parties, particularly for funding purposes.

When the participants discussed these ten key issues, they agreed on the importance of some of the points, and also made additional suggestions of areas that need to be addressed.

- **Brokering contact**

Institutions need to assess and prioritise the interface between business and community, managing the connectivity between different stakeholders. Once contact has been made, the details need to be kept up-to-date, which is labour-intensive but necessary, in case a business tries to get in touch with an individual who has left the institution. The originally-raised issue of data management comes into play here, because contacts frequently are not shared between institutional departments.
- **The changing role of the academic**

It was suggested that people working in academia are not necessarily business-minded, and do not necessarily want to be, which is why they entered their particular sector of work. People with research skills are already taking on a secondary role of teaching, and if they are to also work with business then they will need additional support and training to fulfil this role. Many senior staff members have no practical experience of a business environment, and it was suggested that instead of operating BCE with a top-down hierarchy, a community of practice needs to be developed, so that the leadership in these projects can be taken on by practitioners in the field.
- **Identity management**

This links to the academic's changing role. Within an institution, people take on several different identities, but use the same knowledge base of skills. Managing those identities in an increasingly complex environment will become more and more difficult.
- **Supporting cultural shift and strategic leadership**

Because BCE is new to universities, not everyone will 'buy into' the concept immediately, nor will it be integrated into the system straightaway. As institutions recognise the benefits of engaging with business and the community, their mindset will change. However, this will be a lengthy process and this change will require support from the wider JISC network. In terms of individuals, the strategic leadership is key, and the people involved in BCE initiatives have the added task of embedding its principles into the institutional culture. This may prove tricky when often the staff on BCE projects are employed on short-term contracts and thus do not have the time or the influence needed to have an institution-wide impact.
- **Encouraging engagement**

Businesses, the community and institutions all need to understand the benefits they can accrue from BCE, whether they are financial or skills-based. If these benefits and outcomes are not clear, then the expectations of the involved parties are unlikely to match up. It was suggested that SMEs are offered numerous services from various providers, and they do not fully understand what is being offered to them or what benefits they might derive. If universities are going to produce graduates who are skilled enough to flourish in the world of business, they need to engage to find out what skills the world of business actually wants. If a non-validated training course is providing the skills needed by a particular business, they have no reason to seek out a validated one. It was also suggested that there is relatively little academic engagement with the third sector, despite the high numbers of people working in this field and their very specific training requirements.
- **Engaging with experts**

Though institutions might think that all the top experts in a particular field are employed within academia, there are also experts working in think-tanks, industry, and as self-employed individuals. This wide range of expertise needs to be engaged with and harnessed so as to provide the broadest possible base of knowledge.

- **Creating business models**

Many institutions are traditionally thought of as being made up of separate departments with limited cross-communication. As businesses, they need to look at how they operate, as many are doing. It was suggested that offering web-based services would be a suitable first step, so that some expertise could be accessed by external organisations for free before they need to start a formal paying link-up. It was also mentioned that if businesses do want university expertise, they will tend to approach that department directly as a matter of course rather than seeking out and going through a university-wide portal.

- **Metrics**

It was agreed that measuring outcomes is vital. It was suggested that metrics need to be carefully aligned with the work's outcomes, as it is possible that institutions might tweak the work and shift behaviours to hit the targets, rather than assessing the outcomes the project was supposed to achieve. It was also suggested that rather than establishing discrete, measurable targets, organisations might seek to better articulate, measure and track strategic achievement.

Understanding organisations' roles

In this changing area, the functions served by FE, HE and indeed JISC itself will also be altering and adapting. For FE and HE institutions, their local communities' needs will vary, so they need to stay engaged with what is going on.

4. Suggested areas for further work/future focus

a) For institutions

Marketing

Institutions need to understand the benefits of marketing and market segmentation. A BCE connection with the central marketing function is important and similarly, marketing departments need to understand the benefits of BCE projects and, indeed, exactly what they are offering, so that suitable external organisations can be approached, and if enquiries come in to the institution, they can be fielded to an appropriate department.

Hierarchy and staffing

As senior staff are not necessarily the best people to lead enterprise projects with BCE organisations, communities of practice could be established so that practitioners with experience in the field could take the lead.

A continuous effort is required to support, train and harness people for BCE projects and also to develop and deliver the BCE agenda, in partnership with key stakeholders like the Technology Strategy Board, the Institute of Knowledge Transfer, the Leadership Foundation and the HE Academy.

As has been shown, the strategies needed for successful BCE can be applied to other sectors of an institution's work, meaning that infrastructures can be shared, at least to the extent of interoperable systems. The BCE approach encourages institutions to perceive their knowledge exchange and workforce development activity - including public engagement, community and cultural engagement, and lifelong learning - simply as services to be managed and delivered to a

defined market, based on the institutional strategy for external engagement and specialist knowledge and expertise. This implies an end-to-end process, or at least parallel strategic and operational end-to-end processes. These might comprise, for example:

- 1) a) defining strategy and market
- b) aligning and developing resource (capacity planning)
- c) putting strategy into operation
- d) marketing (externally), and communicating (internally)
- e) strategy-reviewing and refreshing strategy

alternatively:

- 2) a) initiating external contact/opportunity
- b) recording, defining and validating opportunity
- c) managing the relationship and managing the supply chain
- d) analysing requirements
- e) configuring the knowledge/expertise solution
- f) managing quality and risk and any co-delivery, outsourcing or supply chain aspects
- g) delivering the solution

Protocols of excellence

Good practice is required in other areas related to BCE that make the process as a whole successful. These include:

- engagement processes including registration and booking;
- collaborative delivery processes including use of third-party services;
- service level agreement checklists and standards.

While institutions have many years of expertise behind them when it comes to academic quality and operations, their business operations are in their infancy. Thus encouraging excellence in their business activity will benefit all areas of their outward-facing work, not just the BCE arena. Such standards will help sustain and preserve the quality of the institution in an increasingly competitive climate.

Analysis

Some participants suggested that analytic tools were needed, to support criteria for defining what to market versus what will sell/be used. These would need to be realistic in terms of institutional strategies. This would be quite a sophisticated resource, which may be better addressed on a sector by sector basis.

Online marketing

Participants suggested institutions would benefit from using more innovative marketing channels for BCE, such as an online shop front, which some institutions have used, a facility which can be purchased fairly easily and at relatively low cost. Institutions could also consider offering online engagement processes such as a booking system or identity management, or delivering material online via interfaces such as iTunes or GoogleDocs.

Referrals

If institutions cannot meet the needs of a business, they need to be able to refer it on to another institution which does have the required expertise. Participants suggested developing an online referral scheme or protocol, enabling institutions to search for appropriately-skilled colleagues elsewhere.

Data management and metrics

Collecting and analysing a vast range of complicated data in order to measure an institution's performance against targets is difficult but vital. A critical aspect of remaining competitive is benchmarking, which is another reason why data collection and the derivation of reliable year-on-year metrics provide essential aspects of institutional business intelligence. Monitoring and evaluation were regarded as the areas in which universities were weakest by the PACEC team analysing the strategic plans submitted for the Higher Education Innovation Fund for HEFCE. Interoperable systems, improved data management practices and policies, institution-wide reporting and CRM processes will all help to address this issue.

The limitations of technology

When participants discussed the need for business to access information held within institutions, they were keen to emphasise the fact that in this context technology alone cannot act as an enabler. First and foremost, a person is needed to act a broker between partner organisations and explain what is on offer and how it can be accessed. Participants suggested that this could be part of the business development manager's role.

Establishing benefits

Obviously any strategic or technological change has to be supported by the people involved. Without their buy-in, no change at all will be effected. Thus, the key issue must be for those already part of the BCE network to share their experience with others, demonstrating the benefits of the projects. These may be:

- **Financial:** Institutions' income is increased through external partners paying for services, or through student numbers increasing exponentially due to the institution's raised profile. External organisations that have taken advantage of academic expertise increase their income through more effective and efficient operation.
- **Skills-based:** Institutions who work with business see first-hand the skills that new graduates need to succeed, and can adapt their course offerings accordingly. External organisations will then get suitably equipped new recruits, and can train their existing employees with a course run by the institution.
- **Personal:** Institution staff working on external projects may find that they have material for publication, thus raising their profile in academia. They will have new expert contacts from the world of industry to collaborate with, and for all involved it can prove a career boost.

Encouraging buy-in

As has been shown, the biggest barrier for institutions is that BCE is still not considered a priority by many or by many of their academic and other staff, and this is particularly the case for those

engaged in the community engagement component of BCE. Those working on BCE projects, with the support of JISC and the wider BCE community, will need to take the lead in highlighting the importance and benefits of this work.

Technological and Licensing Issues

The rights to use and exploit software, for which institutions have licenses, for BCE activities, appears to have been causing needless problems, which could be overcome with foresight and better communication. It has been recommended that institutions ensure that their procurement and computing services departments consider BCE activities when licensing in software, and thus negotiate appropriate, i.e. less restrictive, terms. Likewise, libraries should consider the potential use of licensed data for BCE and knowledge transfer activities. While this may increase costs initially, it would greatly ease potential legal problems related to their use for BCE purposes, and also reduce the risk of a costly legal case in the future. Ultimately, this comes to an issue of strategic intent – the preparedness to meet such additional costs – and the organisational co-ordination required.

Encouraging Access to Resources

External partners and private individuals may need to access information that is 'gatekept' by an institution, but visibility of these resources is an issue. Demand for this data within institutions is not evident because people outside institutions do not know they exist. As we have seen, even where these resources are available and on offer for people to come in and use them, the packaging and terminology are often inadequate, and the resources are not tailored for a non-academic readership. Participants suggested that the mindset has to change – institutions expect interested parties, including businesses, to come to them, whereas in reality businesses want things delivered to them.

One of the key issues is how e-access to resources can be controlled. Certainly, technology is there to support authentication (such as barcode, IP, username and password, and so on), but obviously these are not free solutions. What may be needed now is consultation and negotiation to explore and agree different costing models based on different user groups – for example, a charity or a community group might be given free access, subject to some checks; SMEs might pay a small charge; and larger businesses would pay a larger charge. This model would bring with it some logistical problems in terms of law for institutions, as they would effectively be setting up subscription databases which may affect external funding.

CRM

Two dimensions have been identified as being particularly useful in defining an institution's overall position in relation to the stage of development in the CRM systems deployment. They are:

1. the breadth of the functions (BCE services/activities) managed by the CRM system, and the extent to which the system is functionally integrated with other relevant institutional (back-office) systems;
2. the level of uptake (or proliferation of use) of the CRM system across the institution's business units

Academic institutions have many purposes. They serve multiple communities and provide a very wide range of services, and as has been shown, different departments of the same institution often fail to communicate effectively with each other. This separation, with departments operating

as discrete units rather than part of one large organisation, can lead to sections employing a narrowed focus and therefore not looking to attain overall institutional objectives, instead seeking to simply achieve their own sectional goals as best they can. In addition, any initiatives which are planned to become universal across an institution may need to be interpreted and re-interpreted several times as each sectional environment is encountered and requires adaptation.

Haywood et al (2007) observed a contrast between the situation in many universities and colleges and that in other organisations that deploy a CRM system in the operation of a business-to-business service. They saw that generally these latter organisations are able to demonstrate progress in some areas which often create difficulties for the higher education sector, such as the operation of the system across all of the client-facing staff and sections, the establishment of a single database and the use of the system for multiple purposes. In the intervening time since that study, from the evidence of the workshop participants, this situation has not changed.

The study originally found that businesses have been able to establish their selected CRM system so as to be the primary, and in some cases the only, communications channel with their clients. Not only that, they observed there is also a level of sophistication in CRM system use which exceeds the current capabilities of most universities and colleges investigated. Businesses were using their CRM system for processes including:

- management oversight of projected revenues;
- identification of campaign responses;
- opportunities for cross-selling;
- precisely targeted e-marketing communications;
- electronic feedback on responses to newsletters and service offers.

The study did not find that such processes were well-established in higher education sector units dealing with business-to-business activity, and though they observed that institutions were looking to extend their CRM deployment, from the evidence of the workshop participants it would seem that this has not yet happened. Therefore it is worth reiterating the original recommendations from the 2007 study.

Haywood et al (2007) advise that whatever CRM system the institution intend to put into effect or the outcomes it hopes to achieve, the overall strategic goal will only be reached by taking into consideration the organisational, social and technical environments in which the institution operate. The phases are as follows:

- in the context of the institution's overall strategic plan, define the desired level and scope of BCE activity;
- consider the forms of customer interaction appropriate to this desired BCE activity;
- formulate or re-formulate organisational structures which can sustain these customer interactions;
- evaluate or re-evaluate CRM system products which will serve the defined organisational structures and sustain the BCE activity;
- produce an implementation plan which will introduce and embed the selected CRM system into the working practices of all who are engaged in BCE activity.

As they point out, this is not as linear a process as it may initially seem from a cursory glance at the list; it is in need of regular review to ensure that the system is still fulfilling the necessary requirements. (Haywood et al recommend a major review of each complete iteration of these phases on a five-yearly basis.)

Once the CRM system is in place, its use may be broad (rolled out across the organisation) or deep (integrated support from the units that already use it); Haywood et al found that it will usually be a combination of the two situations. However the CRM system operates or is used, a substantial programme and a robust structure are both needed, taking into account:

- alignment between the main institutional strategy and the BCE ambitions;
- methods of client interaction;
- possible changes to organisational structure;
- evaluation and selection of a suitable CRM system and an implementation plan.

Access to information

Though some delegates felt that JISC could be guiding them on various complex legal issues, some basic information is already available for free and with immediate access via the internet. Key sources of information include:

- Legal matters: JISC Legal (www.jisclegal.ac.uk)
- State aid: the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/businesslaw/state-aid/index.html>)
- State aid: the European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/overview/index_en.html)
- Data protection and privacy: the Information Commissioner's Office (www.ico.gov.uk)
- Intellectual property from the UK Intellectual Property Office (www.ipo.gov.uk).

Collaboration

Securing expert advice is by no means a cheap process. Delegates suggested that SMEs and other external organisations with particularly limited resources might collaborate in areas like research procurement; for example, one group of SMEs might form a consortium (many sector-based examples exist already though not necessarily with this particular purpose) to subscribe to a marketing resource, making the shared cost worthwhile. The same principle could be applied to access to network, technical and security resources, via or in collaboration with HE and FE institutions and supporting bodies.

Access to resources

Many workshop participants felt that many of the resources routinely available within the education sector and to their alumni should be made more widely available to the taxpayer, who ultimately funds these resources, and businesses and other external organisations. These resources could include research outputs, education materials, and expert information services. Should institutional resources be opened up for external access, simply having the ability to walk into a building and read a hard copy of information would not be enough; external partners would want online access so they could gather the appropriate information from home or their office.

b) For JISC BCE - supporting institutional collaboration and engagement

The need to promote BCE

Accessibility is an issue that has been pinpointed as vital, and the role of ICT is key. This makes JISC's involvement, as an infrastructure and service provider, crucial in supporting institutions' engagement with business and the wider community. As has been suggested, in many institutions, BCE is still a peripheral activity, not yet embedded into their core offering, and certainly JISC could promote the relevance of BCE to their traditional community (eg learning resources and ICT staff).

A community of practice

As we have seen, both sides of the BCE equation constitute the beginnings of a BCE-ICT community of interest. An example of a successful regional knowledge transfer community of practice is KnowledgeLondon, a regional knowledge transfer network which has consistently grown its members, holds regular events on current themes and challenges and attracts many members from all over the country. Participants agreed that continuing to build this community is vital in taking forward JISC's work in this area and promoting communication between the traditional JISC communities of IT, libraries and administration and BCE communities and practitioners. Two Advisory Services projects, the Awareness and Education in BCE for JISC Community and the Trialling of Online Collaborative Tools, have been tasked with further enabling the development of this community of interest, within the wider JISC community and among BCE practitioners respectively. Future BCE communications and marketing work will also focus on encouraging the development of this BCE-ICT community of interest, working with a number of stakeholders such as the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA), the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), the Institute of Knowledge Transfer, the HE Academy and the Leadership Foundation.

Clarity on points of law

Many workshop participants suggested that JISC advise them on some issues of legal confusion. These included:

- what is permissible in terms of widening the use of publicly-funded ICT infrastructure and digital assets;
- what is permissible in terms of storing data;
- what is permissible in terms of sharing data, both within organisations and with external partners;
- what data may be used for.

The Data Protection Act 1998 does not seem to have been effectively disseminated to BCE practitioners or those within institutions who are responsible for running and maintaining digital and ICT resources, and JISC can certainly take a lead on this. This confusion has increased in institutions in correlation with the increased volume and complexity of the information and data being handled. New competencies are needed to manage that information and data, such as exchanging data across systems, storage in repositories, archiving, backup, business continuity, and data mining.

JISC Legal have guidelines on their website about data protection (www.jisclegal.ac.uk/dataprotection/dataprotection.htm) and on data sharing (www.jisclegal.ac.uk/publications/datasharing.htm), and this needs to be communicated to those working in the field. Similarly, JISC should promote more widely the advice and assistance that JISC Legal is able to provide, and that JISC Legal provides (or JISC funds others to provide) training for BCE practitioners on the application of legal principles to their activities.

The use of open source code and open source licence terms is also a complicating factor in knowledge transfer activity, specifically those that relate to software commercialisation, and which can result in barriers to knowledge exchange and unforeseen liability. Yet the use of open source licences has been encouraged by JISC, perhaps without fully appreciating the consequence for knowledge transfer activity. It has been recommended that JISC review its policy in this respect.

It was also suggested that JISC's terms on ownership of intellectual property are clarified and

that through the Funders' Forum JISC helps to encourage a common approach to IP ownership, essentially allowing the institutions to own the IP they have created.

Promoting assistance

It was requested that JISC prepare some guidance and information about state funding assistance specific to academic institutions and their BCE activities.

It was recommended that JISC promotes more widely the assistance that is already available, such as the Lambert Toolkit, the guidance and courses offered by AURIL CPD and PRAXIS and guidance from UKIPO on intellectual property.

CRM

The issues facing institutions when dealing with CRM having been identified in the studies and confirmed in the workshops, JISC is now engaged in delivering support and leadership for institutions in this area.

c) Other observations

State aid

As has been established, BCE activity can entice institutions into transgressing state aid regulations, and there is little clarity in the knowledge transfer and BCE practitioner community of the legal implications of state aid. It has already been recommended that institutions familiarise themselves with this area of law and that JISC could provide more information to its constituency about state aid and the effective use of the existing block exemptions that allow limited State aid to be provided in certain circumstances. McCaul et al (2007) suggested closer liaison with bodies including HEFCE and AURIL, in order to facilitate discussion of block exemption policies and its impact on BCE activity.

5. Concluding remarks

Though identifying potential barriers is by definition a disheartening task, the range of opportunities unearthed and possible solutions suggested in this process by workshop participants, couple with the clear mission perception they have with regard to BCE, make it evident that this is a fast-growing, fast-moving area of work to which facilitators on both sides of the demand-supply equation are committed. Encouraging clear communication and ICT-enabled information exchange between all parties, to foster a culture of greater understanding between BCE participants, will be an excellent first step on the road to a highly successful, innovative programme of inclusive, engaging work.

7. References

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