

## Business and Community Engagement

An overview of JISC activities

Briefing Paper

October 2007

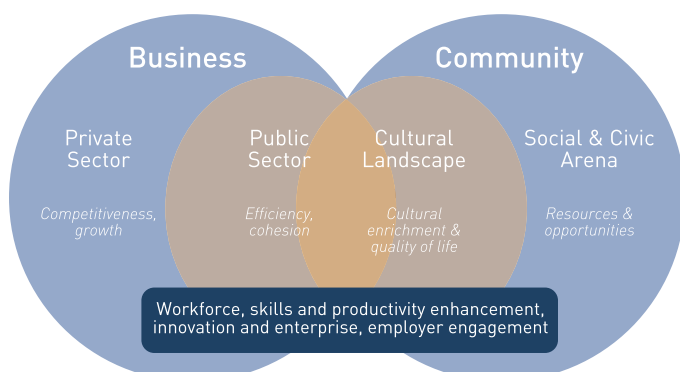
**Business and Community Engagement (BCE) is the strategic management, by higher and further education institutions (HEI/FEIs), of interactions, partnerships and transactions with partners and clients external to the institution. The scope of engagement includes the commercial sector, the public sector (including charities and trusts) the cultural landscape and the social and civic arena.**

The objective is to transfer and exchange knowledge and expertise to deliver benefits to the economy and society at large - and the institutions themselves. BCE includes both research and innovation-led activities (eg consultancy and commercialisation of research) and education-led activities (eg CPD and employer engagement) and is fundamentally about solving problems and providing opportunities. In the 'knowledge economy' BCE makes a key contribution to UK innovation, competitive advantage, skills enhancement, workforce development and social cohesion.

### Knowledge transfer and employer engagement

The government promotes knowledge transfer (KT) 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), and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. Each of the devolved administrations also has policies and schemes focused on KT, and the European Commission promotes it in a number of ways, including through its Innovation work, its Research

Fig 1: The external mission: BCE - diversity of institutional scope of engagement and *outcomes*



Source HEFCE

Note: This diagram does not represent scale of activity

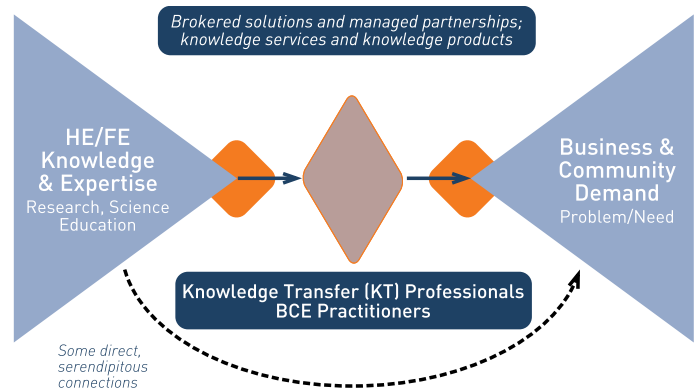


Fig 2: Business and Community Engagement - the dynamic

Directorate-General and networks such as ProTon. Under the new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), the research, innovation and skills agendas have been brought together for the first time in recent years. A significant new policy area for this integrated department to take forward is the employer engagement (EE) agenda, driven by the Leitch Review ambition that more than 40% of the 19-65 age population should have attained level 4 qualifications by 2020. EE requires the demand-driven, business-like, client-focused practices of the KT agenda and aims to increase skills, widen participation through a co-funding model with business, and develop the workforce.

### The developing KT profession and institutional change

The practice of KT is maturing into a profession, as testified by the 2007 launch of the professional body the Institute of Knowledge Transfer (IKT), the continued work of AURIL (Association for University Research and Industry Links) and training provision and guidance provided by bodies such as AURIL-CPD, Praxis and UNICO. There are now around 7000 KT practitioners across HEIs. Most institutions are undergoing the significant cultural and organisational changes necessary to be able to deliver to this agenda meaningfully, and to manage and report on activity effectively - but they need support in this as it is major challenge. Effective knowledge transfer also requires a new and distinct set of skills, including negotiation, high-level communication skills, brokerage skills and legal knowledge, as well as, critically, understanding and experience of both business and academic sectors.

## BCE and JISC

JISC staged a think tank to explore ideas on how best to support institutions' BCE and KT activities. An initial study was undertaken to examine the awareness of, accessibility to and potential need for JISC's services and information resources among the disparate BCE communities. A second study examined the needs of these communities. As a result of these studies, JISC has undertaken some initial pilot activities to inform JISC BCE activity and to support BCE/KT practitioners. These activities include:

- a study on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems usage in higher education
- a study to investigate barriers to the use of publicly-funded infrastructure, services, and intellectual property for BCE
- specialist advice and guidance from JISC Advisory Services in the form of briefing sheets and overviews with a focus on the BCE theme 'Facilitating Collaboration'
- a JISC infoNet and Netskills survey to assess the value of social software for BCE
- a number of other specialised resources, tools and materials to support BCE practitioners from the following JISC Advisory Services: JISC infoNet, JISC Legal, Netskills, TASI, TechDis

## The JISC BCE programme

The BCE strategic theme, announced in the 2007-2009 Strategy, is a new area of work for JISC. As BCE is a cross-cutting agenda, sponsored by the JISC Organisational Support committee, many JISC programmes contribute towards BCE strategic objectives. The JISC Executive is consulting further, through the committee and a working group, on the elements of a more substantial, structured 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:

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 aspiration, through the BCE programme proposals, is twofold:

- to enhance institutions' efficiency, effectiveness and opportunities in BCE
- 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.

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## Further information and resources

Business and Community Engagement at JISC  
[www.jisc.ac.uk/bce](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/bce)

JISC Organisational Support committee  
[www.jisc.ac.uk/aboutus/committees/sub\\_committees/jos](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/aboutus/committees/sub_committees/jos)

Study of customer relationship management (CRM) issues in UK higher education institutions  
[www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/themes/bce/crmstudyfinalreport20070817.pdf](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/themes/bce/crmstudyfinalreport20070817.pdf)

Overview of TASI materials for those involved in BCE  
[www.tasi.ac.uk/advice/overview\\_bce.html](http://www.tasi.ac.uk/advice/overview_bce.html)

Specialist advice and guidance briefing sheets from JISC Legal  
[www.jisclegal.ac.uk/bce/BCEPublications.html](http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/bce/BCEPublications.html)

The use of social software in the BCE sector: a survey by JISC infoNet and Netskills  
[www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/themes/bce/survey](http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/themes/bce/survey)

Institute of Knowledge Transfer  
[www.ikt.org.uk](http://www.ikt.org.uk)

AURIL-CPD for knowledge transfer professionals  
[www.auril-cpd.org.uk](http://www.auril-cpd.org.uk)

PRAXIS: training for technology transfer professionals  
[www.praxiscourses.org.uk](http://www.praxiscourses.org.uk)

UNICO  
[www.unico.org.uk](http://www.unico.org.uk)