Abstract
This poster provides an overview of research undertaken by a specialist unit that combines externally-funded research and consultancy on higher education with inwardly-facing institutional research (IR) activities. It focuses on a key area of the unit's work - international higher education. This work forms part of range of research activity that resulted from work on a project funded by HEFCE and UUK called ‘The Business of Borderless Education’ (2000).

This unit is self-financing and generates around £60,000 in income per year. Most of this income is from research and consultancy projects for UK and overseas funders, including national and regional governments, HE institutions and international policy organisations. The unit is unique in the HE sector with its approach linking academic activity (empirical research and research supervision) with policy development and evaluation (through direct engagement with national and international policy agencies) and with change processes (e.g. consultancy, facilitation and development work).

This approach, combined with the need to generate income, means that the unit especially well-placed to provide insights on issues around networking, policy engagement and research impact.

Research Overview

Main topics areas:
• Definitions of ‘internationalisation’
• Mobility – inward and outward
• International partnerships
• Transnational education (TNE)
• Institutional and national policy & strategy

Research approaches:
• Desk research
• Secondary data analysis (HESA, OECD, UNESCO)
• Case study research
• Survey research

Selected publications

Development of research area:

Research project: ‘The Business of Borderless Education’ (2000) funded by HEFCE & UUK led to the creation of in 2002

Issues: flexible learning, cross-border education, privatisation, marketisation

Emergent field of ‘international HE’ research – multidimensional:
• Conceptual – ‘Internationalisation’
• Policy-focused – comparative, national approaches
• Teaching and learning – e.g. curriculum, pedagogy
• Institutional management – strategy and organization

Research approach:

‘Outputs’

‘Impact’

Recent funders:

‘Practice’

Types of engagement:
• Government – policy development advice, research and evaluation
• Policy agencies – policy analysis, research
• HE institutions – consultancy, quality enhancement (inc. Kingston)
• Other researchers & consultants – collaboration and networking

Funding model (depends on the funder):

Q: Is it research or consultancy? Can be both – depends on ‘public benefit’ test
- Outputs from both count for REF purposes – UoAs = Education, Social Policy
Q: What is the difference? Contract research/consultancy - market rates + VFM

Achieving impact:

• REF – policy development, publications, keynotes, external consultancy, etc.
• Kingston – institutional research and policy/strategy development

Key messages:
1. Contract research – higher success rate than charity/RC proposals
2. Developing & nurturing networks improves awareness and advocacy
3. Tight project timescales require collaboration and teamwork
4. Successful projects generate follow-on research, e.g. BIS
5. Expertise & reputation generates work, enhances impact
6. Multiple forms of dissemination – highly effective

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