

International HE Research: Achieving Impact Through Collaboration & Policy Engagement

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KERN FORUM 2014: Innovation, Impact & Flexible Learning

Thursday, 12th June 2014

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 national 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 topic 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

1. Mellors-Bourne R, Humfry C, Kemp N & Woodfield S (2013). **The wider benefits of international education in the UK**. BIS Research Paper Number 128. London: Department for Business Innovation and Skills.
2. Woodfield, S (2009). **Trends in International Student Mobility: A Comparison of National and Institutional Policy: Responses in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands**. København: Danish Agency for International Education.
3. Woodfield S, Middlehurst R and Fielden J (2009). **Universities and international higher education partnerships: making a difference**. London: Million+.
4. Middlehurst R and Woodfield S (2007). **'International activity or internationalisation strategy? Insights from an institutional pilot study in the UK'**. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 13(3), pp.263 – 279.
5. Fielden J, Middlehurst R, and Woodfield S (2007). **Global Horizons for UK students: A guide for universities**. London: The Council for Industry and Higher Education.

Development of research area:

Research project: 'The Business of Borderless Education' (2000) funded by



&



....led to the creation of



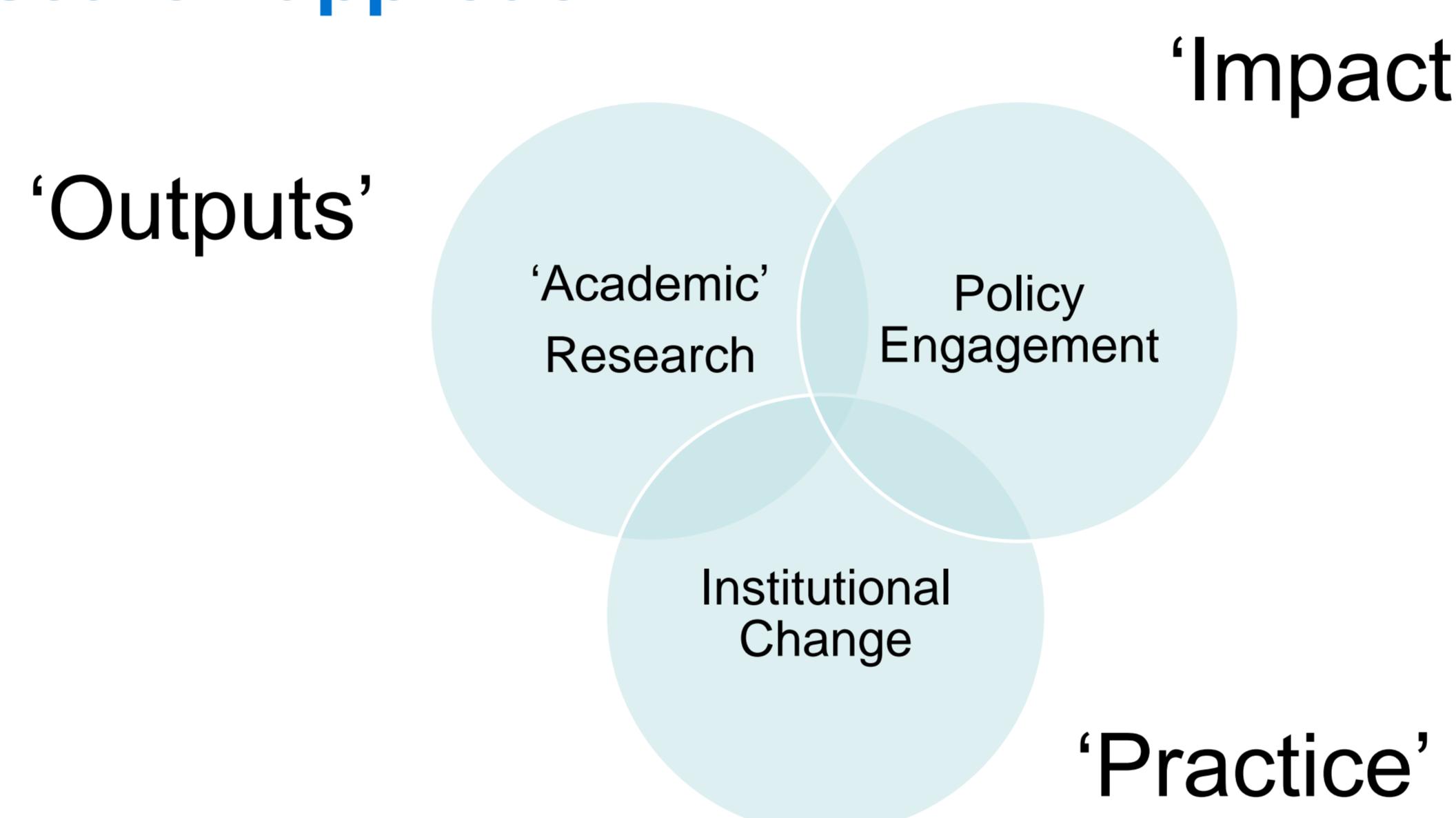
in 2002

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:



Recent funders:



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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