



Consultation European Research Area

The Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) embrace the focus of the European Commission on valorisation and social impact of research. Universities of Applied Sciences are key institutions in Europe when it comes to align higher education of professional practice with innovations demands for the SMEs, business and public sectors.

About the Universities of Applied Sciences

- Professional knowledge and requirements are decisive for the formulation of research tasks. The UAS carry out demand-driven research in co-operation with stakeholders in the SMEs, business and public sector. Which results in concrete innovation and social and economic development. In this way research is embedded in clear professional contexts and the transfer of knowledge is as direct as possible.
- Joint research activities with end-users, producers, universities etc., enable the UAS to gain good insight into what competences the UAS need to provide in their Bachelor- Master and PhD Programmes, to ensure that their education is the very best reflection of the future developments in enterprises, companies and in the public sector.
- Graduates from the UAS will thus be reflecting practitioners with relevant career oriented qualifications for the labour markets, enabling them to develop their line of profession on a daily basis and bringing about innovations through their intra- and entrepreneurial activities.

Quality must be leading, but it can be easier and more flexible

- Application process in two steps: the first step is to submit a preliminary application with basis information on the project. The European Commission can make a selection based on these preliminary applications, filtering out those proposals that seem to have a small chance of success or that do not seem to contribute to the right goals. Then, the second, more time-consuming and complex phase starts. This procedure has the advantage that there is less risk of institutions putting a lot of time and effort into a complex procedure without getting their proposal approved.
- When the focus is on valorisation and social impact of research it is important to create more flexibility in the start of and during the projects. It is especially necessary to create possibility's to generate new partners and adopt new insights during the projects. If we really want that more SMS join the European Research programmes, there must be the opportunity for organisations to be involved in just parts of the program which lay in their interest.
- The UAS have to ensure that their staff can integrate research activities with teaching activities. In many cases this means upgrading of advanced research skills, while at the same time attracting new staff. This social innovation within the UAS, works both ways. At the moment the UAS dispose of higher-qualified staff, their abilities to innovate and improve education are enhanced, and as a consequence this will interest more diversified groups for working at the UAS.
- The UAS researchers are asked to have the so-called "double profile": academic and practical experiences. With respect to innovation, leading researchers with a high academic reputation as well as high experience in application (in economy and society) should be stronger supported.



Excellence in all its facets

Quality and excellence are the primary evaluation criteria of research proposals and the projects themselves. But if innovation, social impact and increasing involvement of SME and public sector are relevant, different ways of quality and excellence must be recognized.

- Different types of research ask for different types of evaluation criteria. Of course the methodological quality must be the same for everybody, but the way you measure quality is not. For traditional research the measuring focuses on peer-reviewed publications or quotes. By more applied orientated research the focus is on the impact on society or market. The research output is not just peer-reviewed publications, but also artefact, CPD-courses and publications in professional journals and IPRs and patents. For example, researchers from the private sector may not have a big record of peer-reviewed publications, but still been recognised as excellent researchers.
- For the university of applied sciences also the impact of research on education is very important. By connecting research and education, the knowledge of the student is up to date and the students become reflecting practitioners with relevant career possibility's for the labour markets .

Encourage knowledge transfer

More possibility's for cooperation on joint research programmes between the private and public sector and the UAS and by this also encourage researchers mobility between the different areas. A databases of non-traditional research output must be developed and an own system of peer-review of this output. In line with the Berlin declaration open access output should be promoted en stimulated.

Access to adequate funding programmes

The potential of quite a large grouping of UAS and SMEs is not unleashed onto the European level at the moment. The actual research funding programmes are 'too far off' for most SMEs and UAS. European funds for development and innovations are not being used by small enterprises, and a large grouping of UASs lack sufficient research infrastructure. Therefore 'near-by' European funds would be welcomed in order to support small scale business innovation. The vision of the UAS is to have a regionally based European programme in every member state. The prerequisite for funding is that regional activities are linked to other European regions through the UASs as the connecting pin.

To realize their proactive roles the UAS require a sustainable research infrastructure. With a research infrastructure supporting knowledge accumulation, the private and semi-public funding of user-driven research can be ensured. The funding mechanisms that match private and public interests need to be developed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tim Creedon'.

Tim Creedon
Chair UASnet
date: 28 November 2011

Contact secretary UASnet: Annelieke van Schie / schie@hbo-raad.nl