

# State of University- Business Cooperation

## UNITED KINGDOM Business Perspective

Study on the cooperation between  
higher education institutions and  
public and private organisations





## The State of United Kingdom University-Business Cooperation: the business perspective

### Partners



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# Executive summary

## Summary

Having analysed the perception of the representatives from a wide range of business fields, we observe a positive sign for the future. More than 90% of businesses that currently cooperate with higher education institutions (HEIs) plan to maintain or increase the intensity of their cooperation. However, more efforts should be put in place to support the companies with the development of mechanisms and activities that can foster their cooperation with universities, as well as their perceived capabilities further.

## About the study

The results presented in this national report are from the State of European University-Business Cooperation (UBC) study executed for the DG Education & Culture of the European Commission (EAC/10/2015) by a consortium led by the Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre. The project investigates university-business cooperation (UBC) from the perspective of both university and business, seeking clarity on mechanisms supporting it, drivers, barriers and challenges. The results are part of two quantitative surveys (university and business perspectives) ran in 2016 that received 17,431 responses, making it the largest International study yet completed on the topic.

## University-Business Cooperation

The level of development of cooperation activities between UK businesses and universities is generally lower than the European average. UK businesses engage mainly in research activities such as

collaboration in R&D and consulting (68,9 % and 45,2% of the respondents reporting the engagement to high and medium extent respectively). As for UBC in education, UK businesses undertake joint activities with universities in mobility of students. Work experience services and knowledge transfer partnerships have been scaled up in recent years, supported by research findings indicating that work experience is of primary importance to student employability.

Particularly undeveloped are the activities of student entrepreneurship and curriculum co-design, mainly due to the lack of organisational structures to support this. Investors are unwilling to invest small sums and universities are lagging behind with the development of incubator and accelerator programs to support small ventures in their infancy.

## Lack of business knowledge and different cultures limit UBC in the UK

For UK businesses, the major factors that limits collaboration with universities are related to lack of people with business knowledge within universities, and cultural differences related to the differing motivations between two organizations. Both perceived barriers can affect how the decision making and negotiation processes are carried out.

The lack of government funding for UBC is the only financial barrier. The majority of barriers perceived by cooperating businesses in the UK and their European counterparts are to some extent similar.

**NOTE:** This report seeks to contribute to our understanding of the business perspective on university-business cooperation (UBC) in the UK, drawing on a survey of European higher education institutions, academics and businesses. While acknowledging limitations relating to the generalisability of the results due to the non-random nature of the sample, the results provide positive signs both of the present and for the future, while also providing an indication as to areas that require future development.

# Executive summary

## **Strong relationships underlie success**

A relationship based on commitment, trust, shared goals and flexibility highly facilitates UBC for businesses in the UK. Given the many differences of the two working environments, a strong working relationship between the two partners can be viewed as a marker for the success of the co-operation. The businesses, however, also recognise high importance of funding in enabling UBC.

Interestingly, most UBC facilitators are perceived stronger by European businesses than they are perceived in the UK with the exception of commercial orientation of the university, which rate exceeds the European average. This aligns with the 2006 policy change where, the UK Government pursued the commercialisation of university research and technology transfer.

## **Benefits for others**

UK business representatives see UBC as much less beneficial for themselves than students and academics. Then, what is the major motivation for UK businesses to undertake UBC?

UK businesses are primarily driven to collaboration with universities to improve their competitiveness, access funding and foster innovation. They cooperate with universities primarily to get access to new technologies and knowledge as well as to obtain funding. There are very few other avenues for access to R&D facilities, since the UK tends to concentrate research in HEIs. UK university research is academically world leading providing the ideas and inventions on which future prosperity will be founded.

## **UBC support is needed**

Businesses in the UK can adopt a range of supporting mechanisms in their interaction with universities, but most of those mechanisms are present in under a third of the businesses. The most developed mechanism for both groups is a top-level management committed to UBC, with a higher score for businesses in the UK (43%) than for their European counterparts (37%). Particularly low in the UK compared to the EU average are the employment fairs and joint laboratories. The most undeveloped mechanisms relate to the funding of adjunct positions and academic-idea competitions.

Overall, the UK needs to do more to support academic ideas generation. The latest Industrial Strategy mentions the importance of entrepreneurship, including academic entrepreneurship but with no indication of what type of support is necessary to help this flourish.

## **It is not our responsibility**

UK businesses generally perceive themselves as reliable partners for HEIs, yet identify their capabilities to be developed to a medium level only. They identified their strength in the capability of doing research with/for universities and absorbing knowledge they get from them. However, UK businesses do not believe that it is their responsibility to collaborate with universities in research, and especially in education.

# Introduction

## About the study

The study focusses on the cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and public and private organisations in the 28 European Union Member States and 5 associated countries.

The State of European university-business cooperation (UBC) study is executed for the DG Education and Culture at the European Commission (EAC/10/2015) by a consortium led by the Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre (S2BMRC), in Germany from January 2016 until November 2017.

The aim of the study is to get a more profound, comprehensive and up to date understanding of the state of UBC in Europe: what is the state of play of a wide range of UBC activities in the different countries, what are the main drivers and barriers for the different stakeholders and at what levels; what is the regulatory framework and socio-economic conditions and what kind of measures/initiatives exist on a national level to support the development of UBC. The project investigates UBC from the perspective of both university and business.

## Main activities

The main components of the project were a series of expert interviews with 23 recognised UBC experts, 52 good practice case studies, a UBC policy and indicators review as well as a major quantitative survey of stakeholders within both HEIs and business. The survey was translated into 25 languages and sent to all registered European HEIs (numbering over 3,000) in the 33 countries during

October-November 2016. Through this, a final sample of 17,410 representatives from within HEIs and business was achieved. This makes the study the largest international study into cooperation between HEIs and business yet completed.

## Why care about university-business cooperation?

- UBC is considered to be the engine towards knowledge-based societies and economies
- UBC is specially needed in the European context, threatened by increased global competition, with ongoing economic and social problems and high levels of youth unemployment
- UBC helps to create a more connected and functioning relationship between government, business and HEIs, which is at the core of EU funding schemes, such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+.
- UBC direct outcomes include:
  - improving the competitiveness of business,
  - increasing the relevance and innovativeness of research and teaching in HEIs,
  - improving the future job prospects of students and graduates,which can in the longer term:
  - create jobs,
  - stimulate economic growth,
  - increase living standards,
  - reduce hindrances to good living.

## Study Objectives

The specific objectives for the study are:

- Chart the current state of play and provide an in-depth analysis of UBC in the countries covered by this study, from the HE and business perspectives
- Deliver 50 case studies of UBC (representative sample, balanced distribution among countries and organisations, balanced distribution of HEI and business led cases);
- Review indicators measuring UBC and propose possible scenarios for the implementations of UBC monitoring in Europe;
- Provide policy conclusions and recommendations for the furthering of UBC and the best approaches to take.



**UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS**  
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

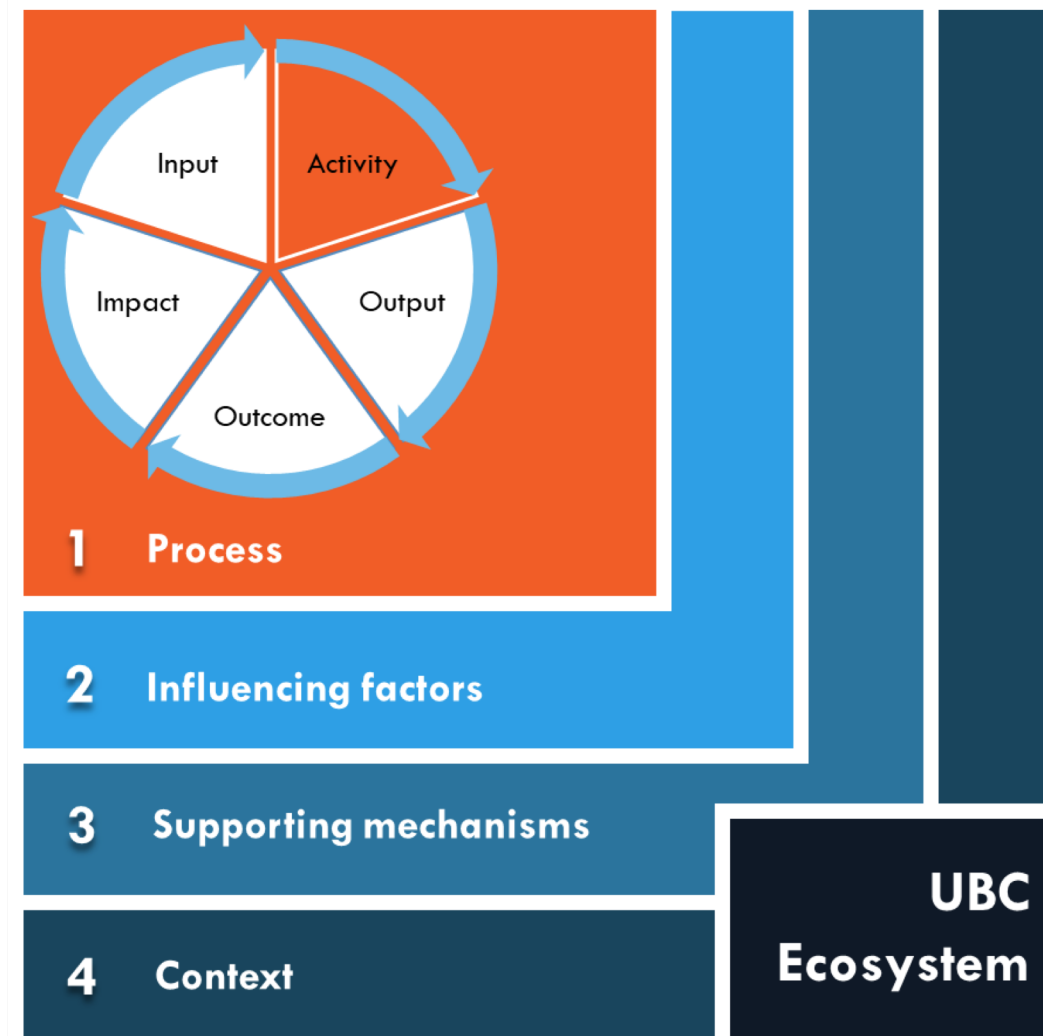
# UBC activities

## UBC Ecosystem Framework™

In order to best organise the project results, a project conceptual framework was chosen.

The UBC Ecosystem Framework possess a number of interrelated elements including the process of undertaking UBC, factors that are influencing UBC, mechanisms supporting UBC and finally the context in which UBC occurs.

The framework ties together the respective project activities, providing a common thread for reporting results and making recommendations.



Source: Galán-Muros, V.; Davey, T. (2017) *The UBC Ecosystem: Putting together a comprehensive framework for university-business cooperation*. *Journal of Technology Transfer*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-017-9562-3>



# UBC activities

Fourteen UBC activities are recognised, commonly categorised into the areas of education, research, valorisation and management.

Area	Activities
<b>Education</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. curriculum co-<u>design</u></li><li>2. curriculum co-<u>delivery</u> (e.g. guest lectures)</li><li>3. mobility of students (i.e. student internships/placements)</li><li>4. dual education programmes (i.e. part theory, part practical)</li><li>5. lifelong learning for people from business (e.g. executive education, industry training and professional courses)</li></ol>
<b>Research</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. joint R&amp;D (incl. joint funded research)</li><li>7. consulting to business (incl. contract research)</li><li>8. mobility of professionals (i.e. temporary mobility of academics to business and vice versa)</li></ol>
<b>Valorisation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>9. commercialisation of R&amp;D results (e.g. licencing/patenting)</li><li>10. academic entrepreneurship (e.g. spin offs)</li><li>11. student entrepreneurship (e.g. start-ups)</li></ol>
<b>Management</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>12. governance (e.g. participation of academics on business boards and businesspeople participation in university board)</li><li>13. shared resources (e.g. infrastructure, personnel, equipment)</li><li>14. industry support (e.g. endowments, sponsorship and scholarships)</li></ol>

UK businesses engage mostly in research UBC activities, such as joint R&D (5.9) and consulting (4.3). As for education related UBC, mobility of students (3.9) is the most developed type. Work experience services and knowledge transfer partnerships have been scaled up in recent years, supported by research findings indicating that work experience is of primary importance to student employability<sup>1</sup>.

Over 50% of businesses do not undertake any management or valorisation related collaboration, with the exception of commercialisation of R&D results, which is perhaps concentrated in a narrow range of industrial sectors, and in a small number of large companies<sup>2</sup>.

Particularly undeveloped are the activities of curriculum co-design (1.9), mainly due to the lack of organisational structures to support this activity and student entrepreneurship (2.0), and investors' unwillingness to invest small sums and universities lagging behind with the development of incubator and accelerator programs to support small ventures in their infancy<sup>3</sup>.

The level of development of UBC activities in the UK is lower than the extent of UBC for European businesses.

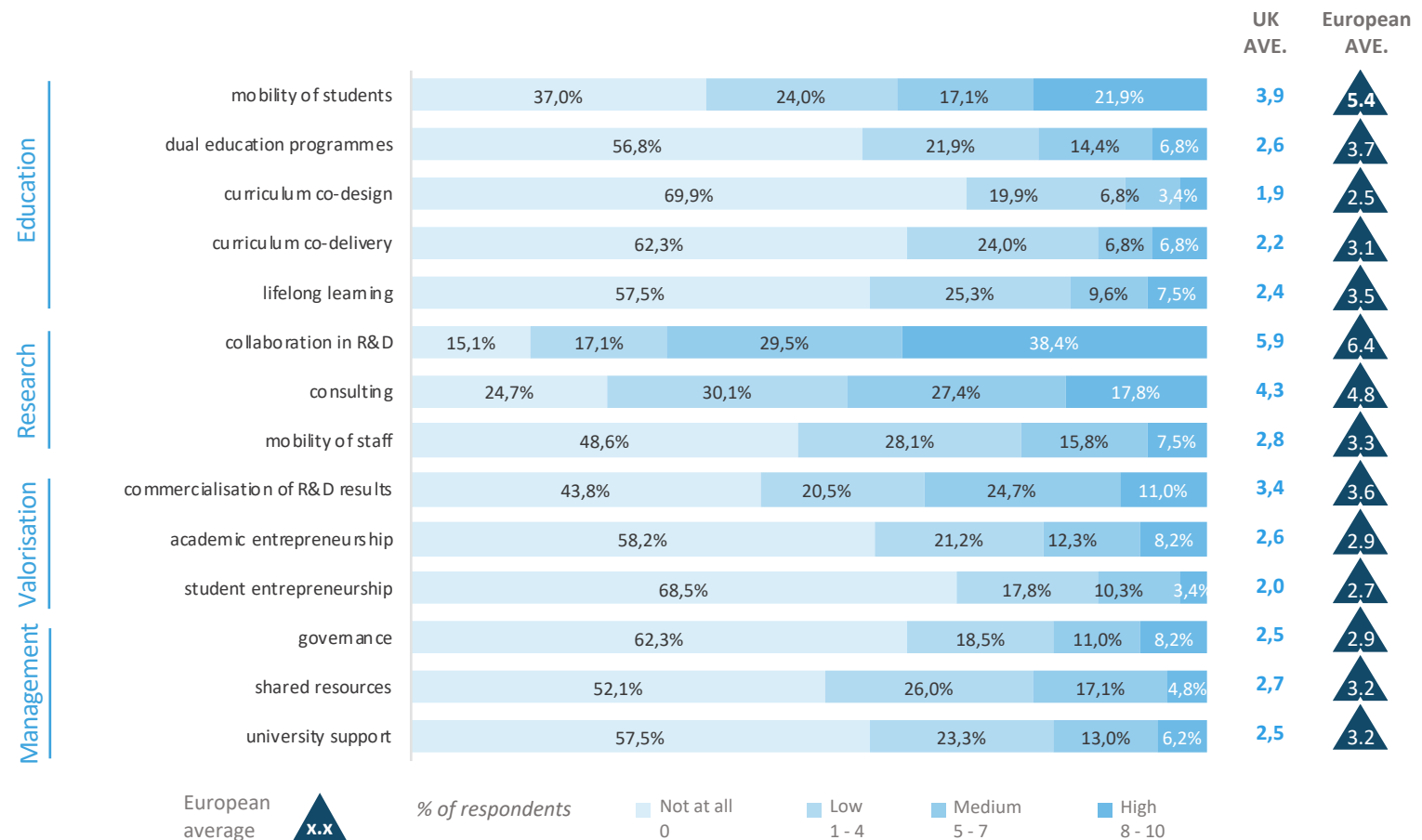
<sup>1</sup> National Center for Universities and Businesses (2017). Annual Review -2016-17. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncub.co.uk/reports/annual-review-2016-2017>.  
<sup>2</sup> Science and Technology Committee of The Parliament of the United Kingdom (2017, March 10). Stimulating demand for technology transfer. *House of Commons Publications*. Retrieved from [https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsstech/755/75505.htm#\\_idTextAnchor009](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsstech/755/75505.htm#_idTextAnchor009)

<sup>3</sup> Corbun, Z. (2012 March, 5). Student entrepreneurs frustrated by lack of funding. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2012/mar/05/student-entrepreneurs-uk-lack-business-angels>

# Development of UBC activities

## UBC activities development

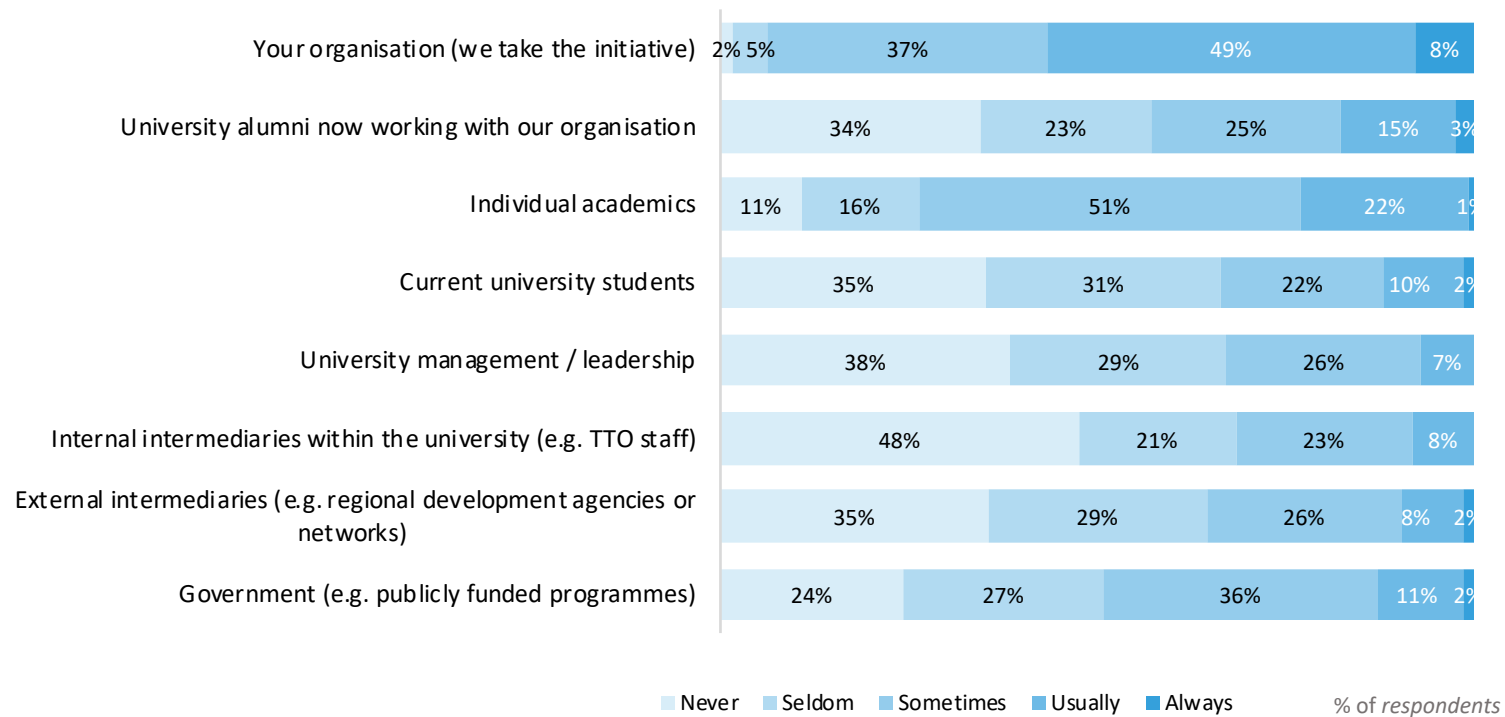
'Which UBC activities do you collaborate with universities in?'



# Initiation of UBC

## How UBC is initiated

'How often various stakeholders initiate UBC activities'



UK businesses clearly see themselves as the main initiators of cooperation with universities. 57% of business state that their organisation always or usually initiates UBC. However, HEFCE research points at a wide 'sectorial variation' in technology transfer, with the pharmaceutical industry leading as initiator of UBC, and other industry sectors taking less proactive approaches<sup>4</sup>.

Businesses in the UK see the individual academics, university alumni and government also active in initiating cooperation.

Internal intermediaries within the universities as well as the university management are perceived as passive in UBC initiation. 69% and 67% of businesses report that they never or seldom undertake any first actions towards UBC initiation respectively.

Similarly, 64% of business state that external intermediaries do never or seldom initiate UBC.

<sup>4</sup> Science and Technology Committee of The Parliament of the United Kingdom (2017, March 10). Stimulating demand for technology transfer. *House of Commons Publications*. Retrieved from [https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsctech/755/75505.htm#\\_idTextAnchor009](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsctech/755/75505.htm#_idTextAnchor009)

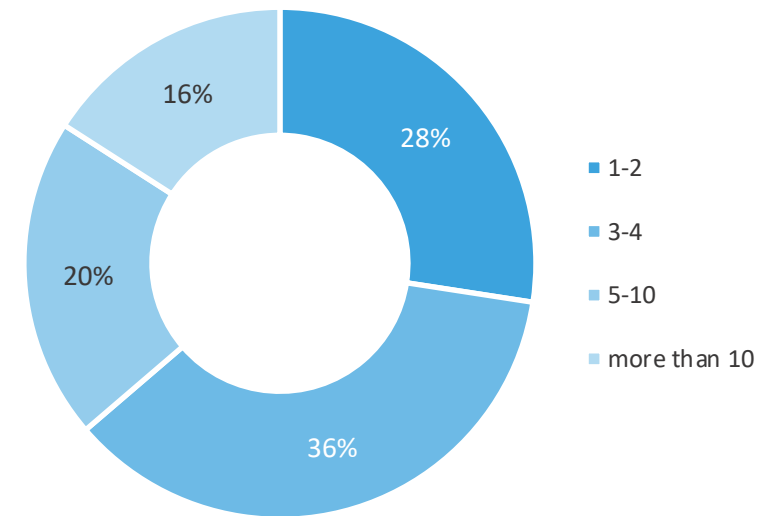
# Geographical location still matters

## Location of university partners

Percentage of cooperating businesses with...	
universities in their region	87%
universities in their country	91%
universities outside their country	79%

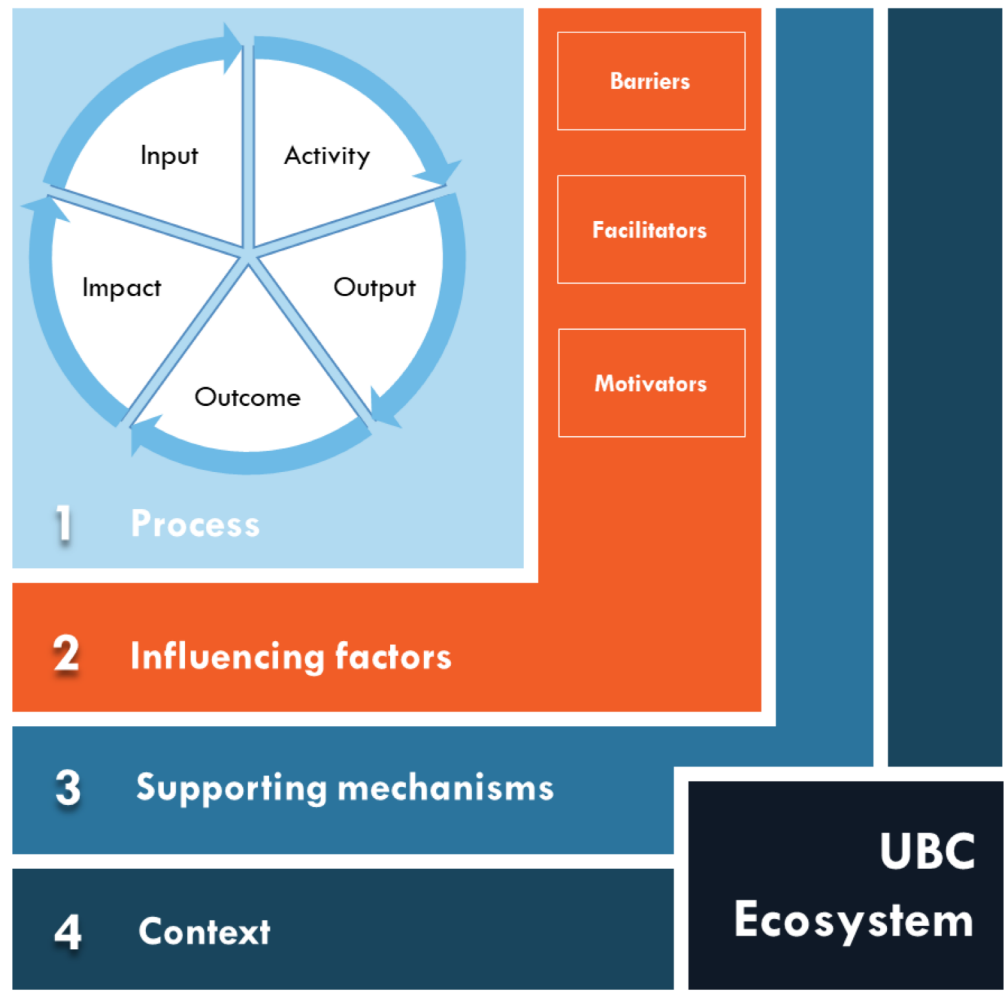
While most UK businesses cooperate with universities within the country (91%), the results also report high percentages for universities from the region and international universities with 87% and 79% respectively.

## Number of university partners



Over two thirds (68%) of the UK businesses cooperate with less than 4 university partners. 20% have established relations with 5-10 universities and only 16% have more than 10 partners.

# Factors influencing UBC



This section outlines the extent to which various factors affect UBC.

Generally, a barrier provides a hindrance or obstacle to do something. Drivers comprise facilitators, which enable or ease the process, and the motivators, which triggers the starting of an activity and are often related to the expected outcome(s).

At the European level, this study has found that removing a barrier does not necessarily create UBC but rather it makes UBC possible. Instead, it is the facilitators and motivators (drivers) that initiate UBC.

For example, even when a lack of funds is often named as a major barrier to cooperation, the presence of funds may not be enough for cooperation to happen if the perceived facilitators or motivators are not sufficient.

# Barriers hindering UBC

## Barriers

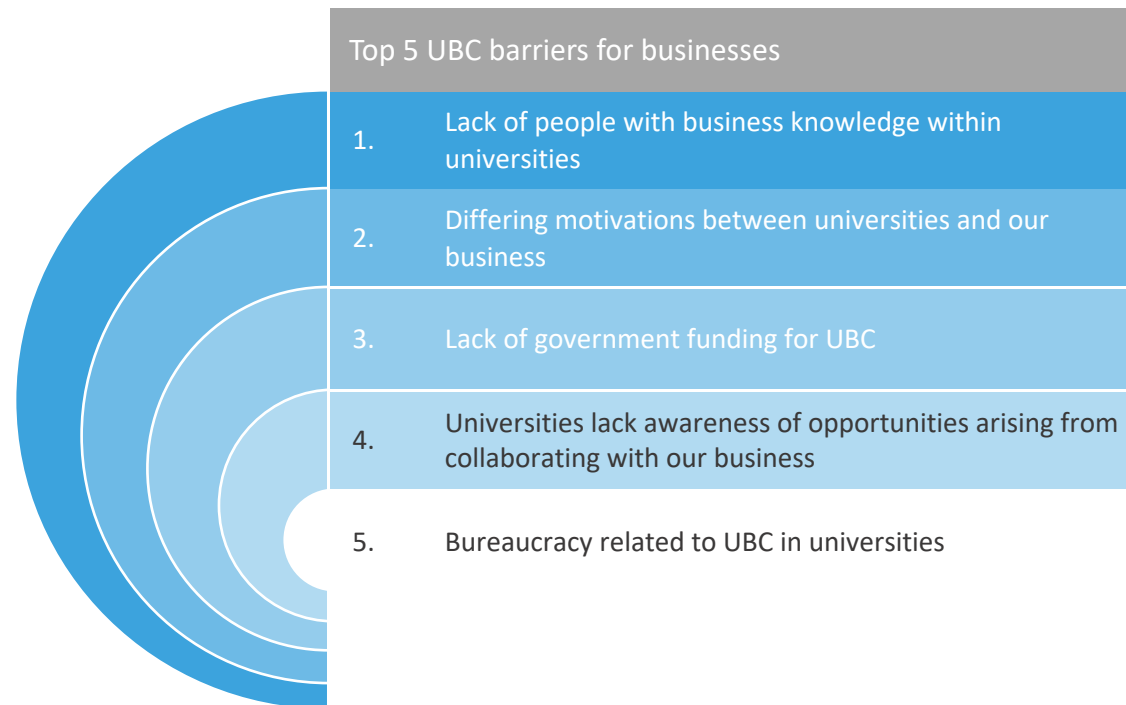
*'What is inhibiting your cooperation with universities?'*

The top five factors inhibiting UK businesses to cooperate with universities are diverse.

The main barriers are related to lack of people with business knowledge within universities, and cultural differences related to the differing motivations between two organizations. Both these perceived barriers can affect how the decision making and negotiation processes are carried out, the ability to include/exclude other parties as needed during the process of innovation development and create cultural distance between the two partners<sup>5</sup>.

The lack of government funding for UBC is the only financial barrier.

The lack of university awareness of opportunities arising from collaboration with business as well as bureaucracy related to UBC are also considered as inhibiting barriers for businesses in the UK.

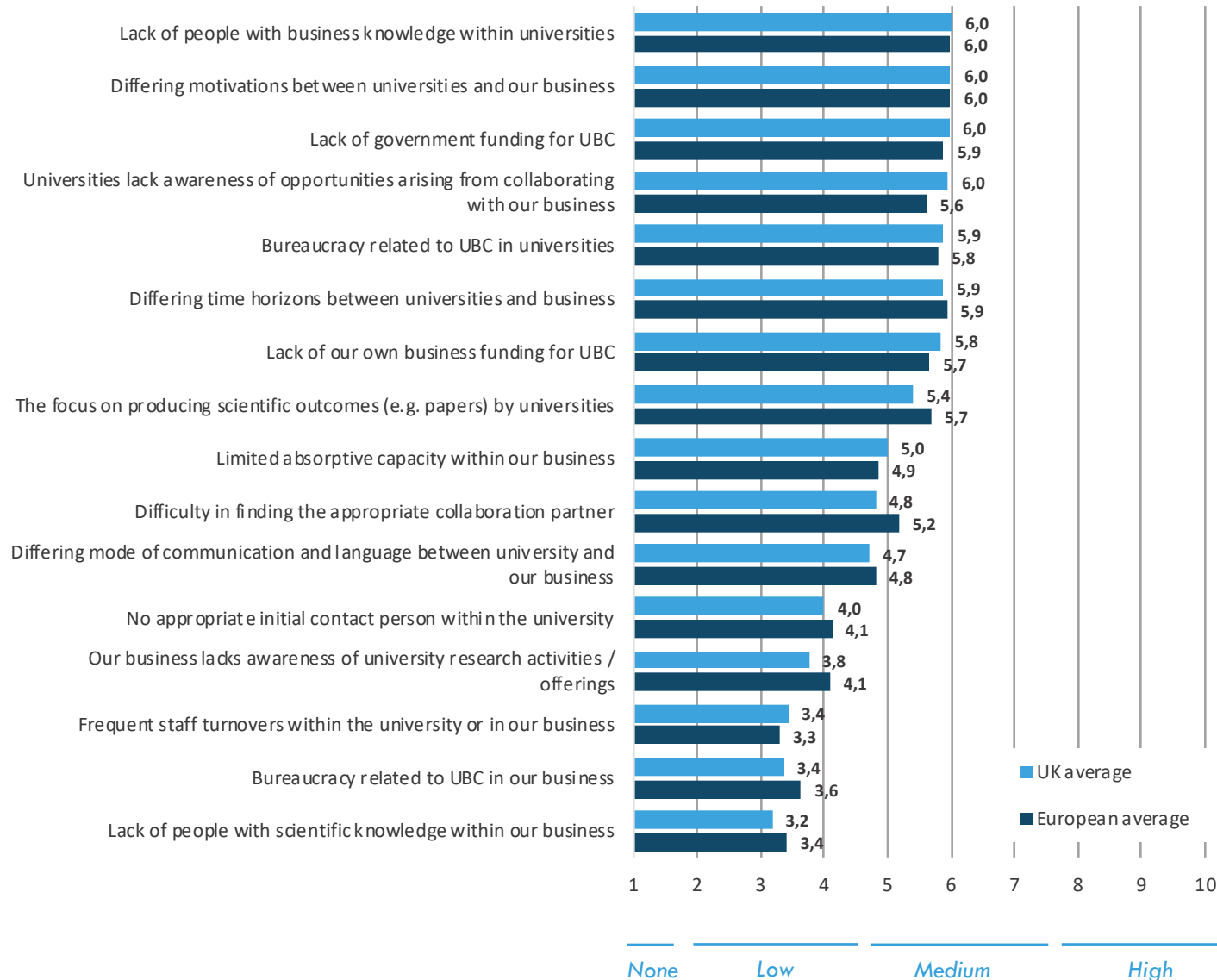


<sup>5</sup> The Government of The United Kingdom (2016, October 6). University and Business IP cooperation to boost UK innovation. [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/university-and-business-ip-cooperation-to-boost-uk-innovation>

# Barriers hindering UBC

## Barriers

'What is inhibiting your cooperation with universities?'



The majority of barriers perceived by cooperating businesses in the UK and their European counterparts are to some extent similar.

The lack of people with business knowledge within universities, differing motivations and the lack of governmental funding are the strongest barriers perceived by both groups. This may be because a shared business culture and common vision can facilitate the collaborations, whose success is determined by the strength of the relationships between people in business and academia. It is also crucial that funding is available to kick-start collaborations<sup>6</sup>.

The focus on producing scientific outcomes along with the difficulty in finding the appropriate collaboration partner bear more importance for European businesses than they do for businesses in the UK.

Lack of people with scientific knowledge within the business is the weakest barrier for businesses in the UK, while frequent staff turnovers is the weakest one for European businesses.

<sup>6</sup> Dowling, A. (2015). The Dowling Review of Business-University Research Collaborations. Department for Business Innovation and Skills, London, UK.

# Drivers stimulating UBC

The main factors that facilitate business cooperation with universities in the UK are related to relationship and funding factors.

A relationship based on commitment, trust, shared goals and flexibility highly facilitate UBC for businesses in the UK, resulting in smoother and more successful collaborations with universities. Given the many differences of the two working environments, a strong working relationship between the two partners can be viewed as a marker for the success of cooperation<sup>7</sup>.

The businesses, however, also recognise high importance of funding in enabling UBC.

*Drivers* are those factors that encourage businesses, academics or HEIs to engage in UBC. Drivers of UBC are divided into two factors:

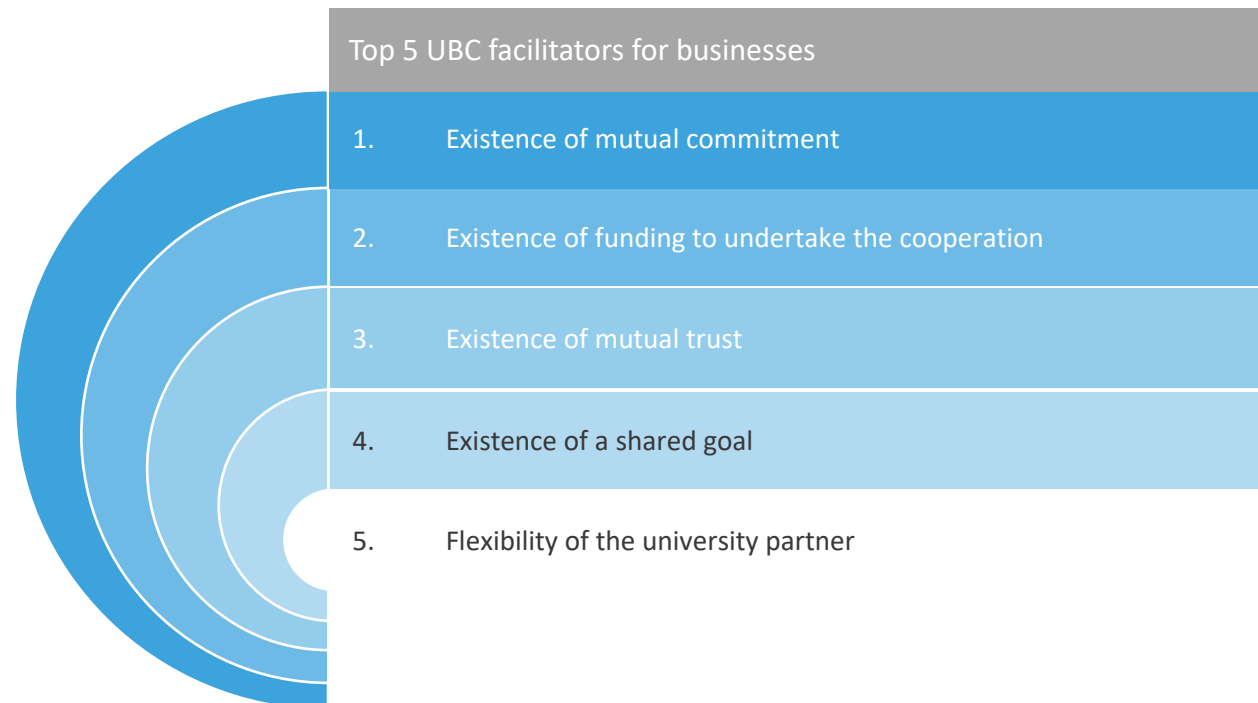
1. **Facilitators** – factors that enable or ease cooperation
2. **Motivators** – incentives or benefits that the respective stakeholders would like from the cooperation

Together, these two factors provide a comprehensive picture of what compels businesses to cooperate.

The 2010-11 State of European UBC study showed that for European universities the existence of strong UBC drivers can overcome the presence of barriers to UBC.

## Facilitators enabling UBC

*'What is facilitating your cooperation with universities?'*



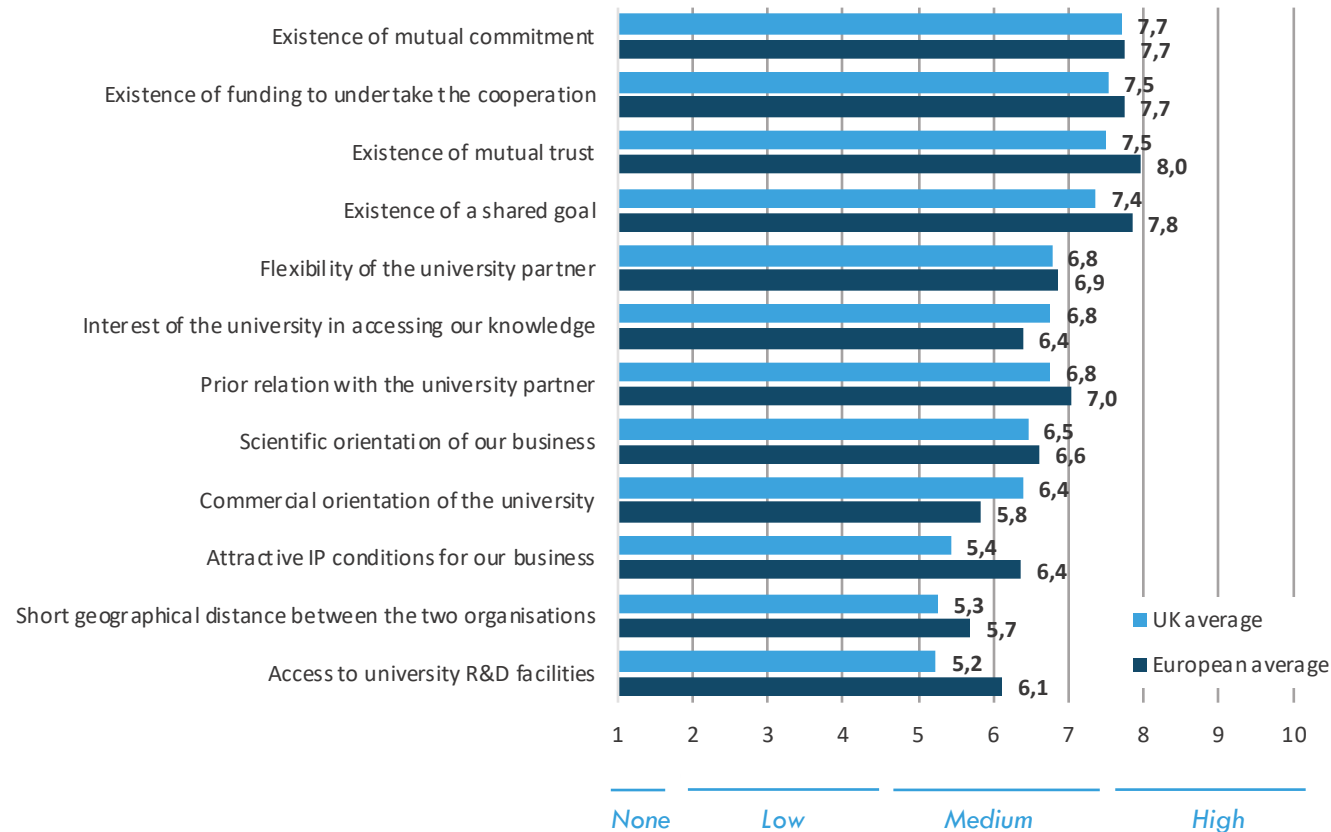
<sup>8</sup> Davey, T., Galan Muros, V., Meerman, A., Tercanli, H., (2017, October 24). Flexible UBC Structures Have the Potential to Boost Cooperation [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://blog.uin.org/2017/10/flexible-ubc-structures-have-the-potential-to-boost-cooperation/>



# Drivers stimulating UBC

## Facilitators

'What is facilitating your cooperation with universities?'



Most UBC facilitators are perceived stronger by European businesses than they are perceived in the UK.

However, compared to the European average, businesses in the UK have a stronger perception of a commercial orientation of the university. This is because, since 2006, the UK Government pursued the commercialisation of university research and technology transfer; it aims at supporting this with additional funding in future, to continue to incentivise university business collaborations<sup>8</sup>.

Contrary, attractive IP conditions along with short geographical distance and access to university R&D facilities facilitate UBC for European businesses to a larger extent than the do for the businesses in the UK.

<sup>8</sup> Science and Technology Committee of The Parliament of the United Kingdom. (2017). Managing intellectual property and technology transfer. *House of Commons Publications*. Retrieved from [https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsctech/755/75503.htm#\\_idTextAnchor005](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmsctech/755/75503.htm#_idTextAnchor005)

# Drivers stimulating UBC

The main motivators for UK businesses to undertake UBC are related to competitiveness, funding and innovation.

Businesses cooperate with universities primarily to get access to new technologies and knowledge as well as to obtain funding. There are very few other avenues for access to R&D facilities, since the UK tends to concentrate research in HEIs. UK university research is academically world leading, providing the ideas and inventions on which future prosperity will be founded<sup>9</sup>.

UK businesses are also motivated to improve their own innovation capacity and their reputation.

A less important but still relevant motivation is to access new discoveries at an early stage.

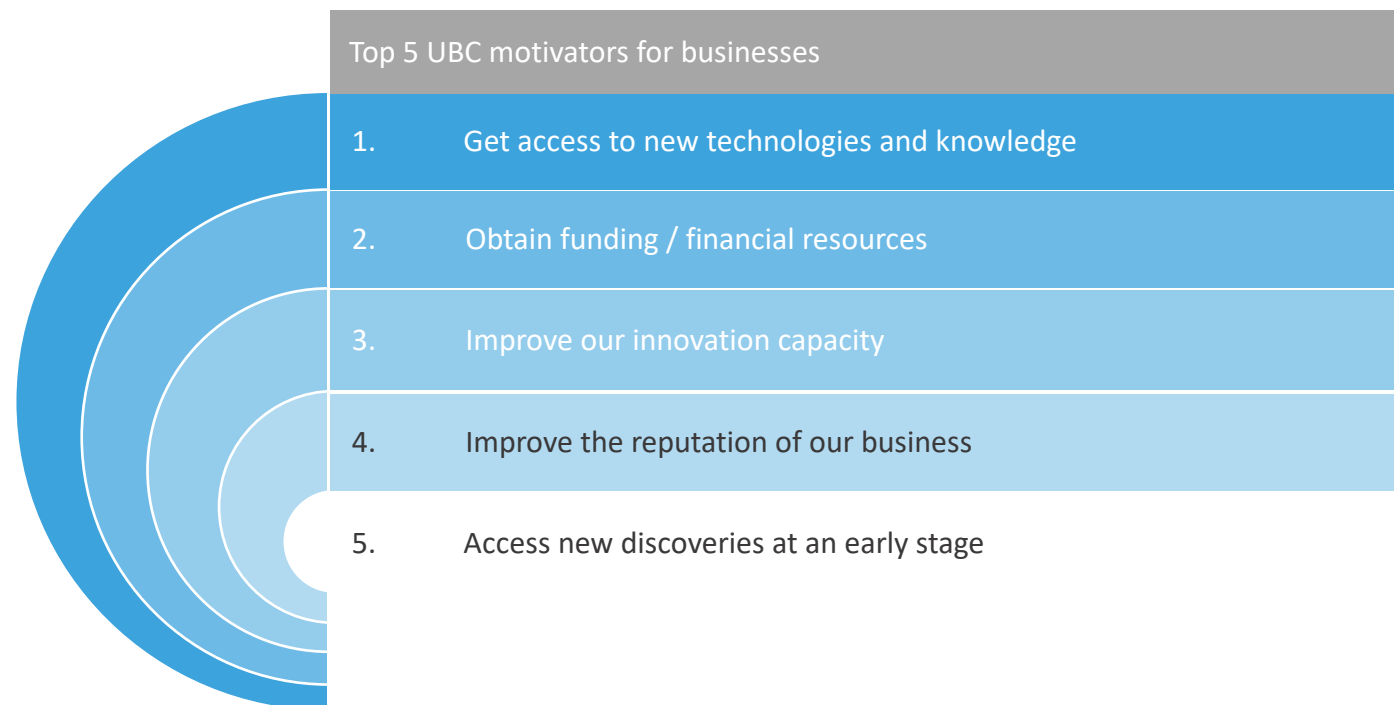
*Motivations for UBC* are the reasons why businesses collaborate with university.

They provide key information about the outcomes that the businesses seek from their collaborative activities relating to education, research, valorisation and management.

The ability of the collaboration to achieve these outcomes will have a substantial influence on the businesses' assessment of the success of their collaboration.

## Motivators

*'What motivates you to cooperate with universities?'*

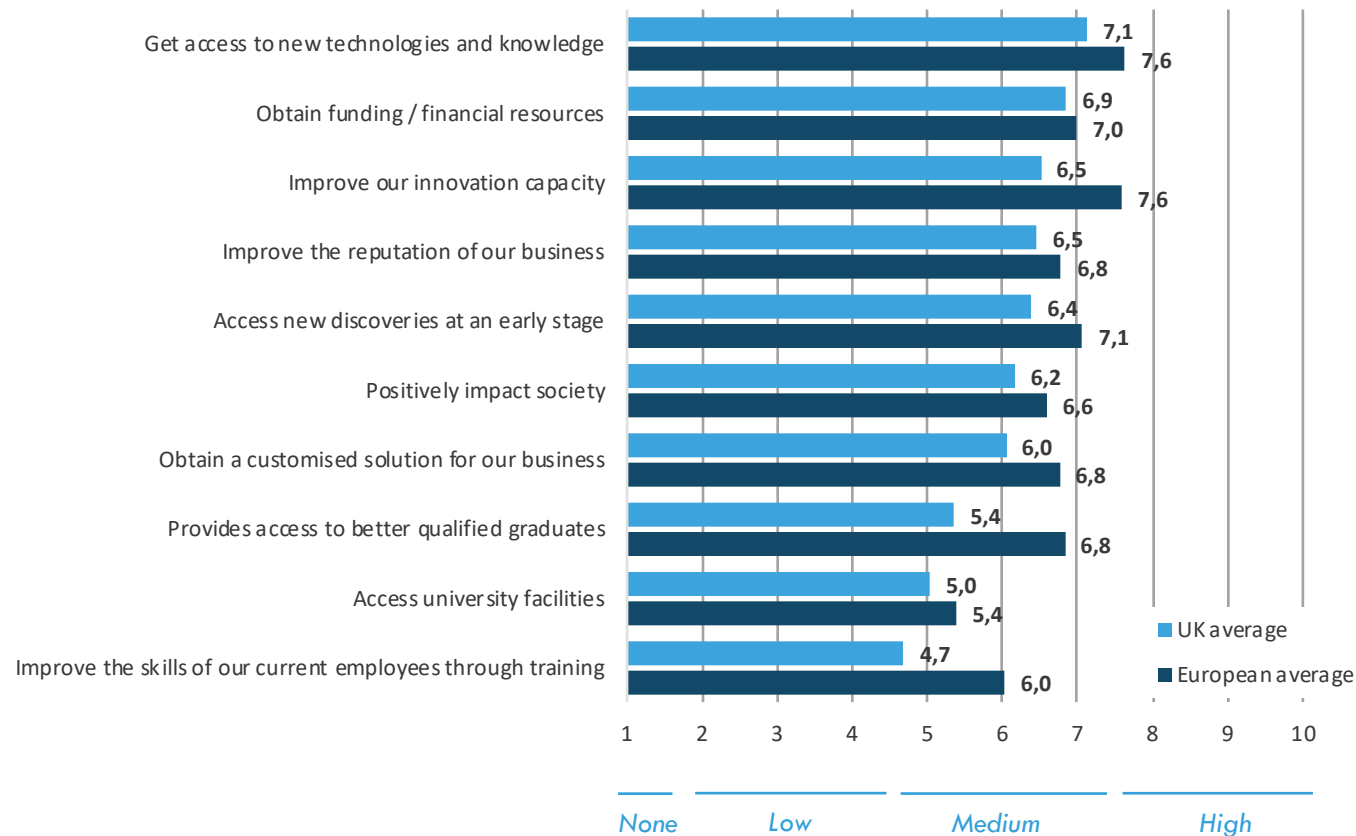


<sup>9</sup> Universities UK. (2015). *Why invest in universities?* [Report]. Retrieved from <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2015/why-invest-in-universities.pdf>

# Drivers stimulating UBC

## Motivators

'What motivates you to cooperate with universities?'



Overall, the importance of the motivations is lower for UK businesses than for their European counterparts.

The most important motivations for both groups are related to new technologies and knowledge, funding and as well as the innovation capacity. Research commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills shows that businesses that engage in partnerships with universities are more likely to invest in R&D themselves (+161%), perform significantly better on process and product innovation sales of novel products, STEM skills and use of technical information than similar firms over a three-year period<sup>10</sup>.

The businesses in the UK are notably less motivated than their European counterparts by the willingness to improve innovation capacity, to access better qualified graduates and improve the skills of the employees through training.

<sup>10</sup> BIS. (2014). *Estimating the effect of UK direct public support for innovation*. Analysis Paper. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/369650/bis-14-1168-estimating-the-effect-of-uk-direct-public-support-for-innovation-bis-analysis-paper-number-04.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369650/bis-14-1168-estimating-the-effect-of-uk-direct-public-support-for-innovation-bis-analysis-paper-number-04.pdf)

# Benefits of UBC

There are some discrepancies in the perceptions of which stakeholder group benefits more from UBC.

The businesses in UK see universities and academics as the main UBC beneficiaries. For the European counterparts these are students and universities.

UK academics are top beneficiaries because a high number of academic publications are usually generated by UBC.

Studies show that academics engaging with business are usually involved in multi-disciplinary research which tend to be more innovative and perceived as of higher quality than average by journals<sup>11</sup>.

Both groups perceive themselves also as beneficiaries but to a slightly lower extent.

The fewest benefits are perceived to be for society and government.

*Benefits* are the perceived positive outcomes (financial and non-financial) from undertaking UBC as relevant for the different stakeholder groups that can potentially participate in UBC.

The perception regarding who benefits from such cooperation can influence the decision to increase or decrease their participation or

the involvement of other groups. For example, if academics perceive their own benefits to be low, they may refrain from engaging in UBC. Yet, if they perceive benefits for students to be high, they might undertake actions that contribute to students' involvement in UBC.

## Benefits of UBC

*'Who receives the benefits of UBC?'*

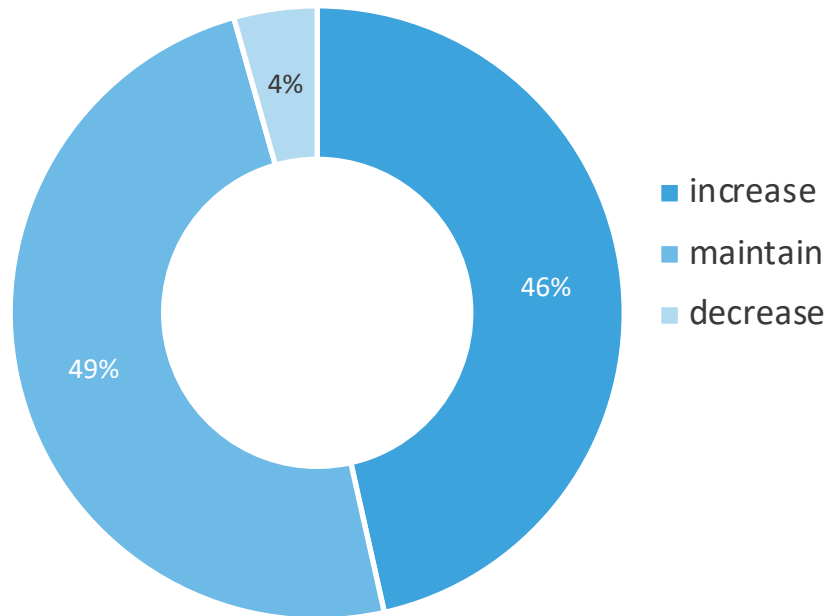
	UK businesses	European businesses
1.	Universities	Students
2.	Academics	Universities
3.	Businesses	Businesses
4.	Students	Academics
5.	Society	Society
6.	Government/public authorities	Government/public authorities

<sup>11</sup> Davey, T. & Galan Muros, V. (2017, March 20). Motivations For Academics To Cooperate With Industry. University Industry Innovation Network.[Blog]. Retrieved from <https://blog.uuin.org/2017/03/what-motivates-academics-to-cooperate-with-industry/>

# Future intentions

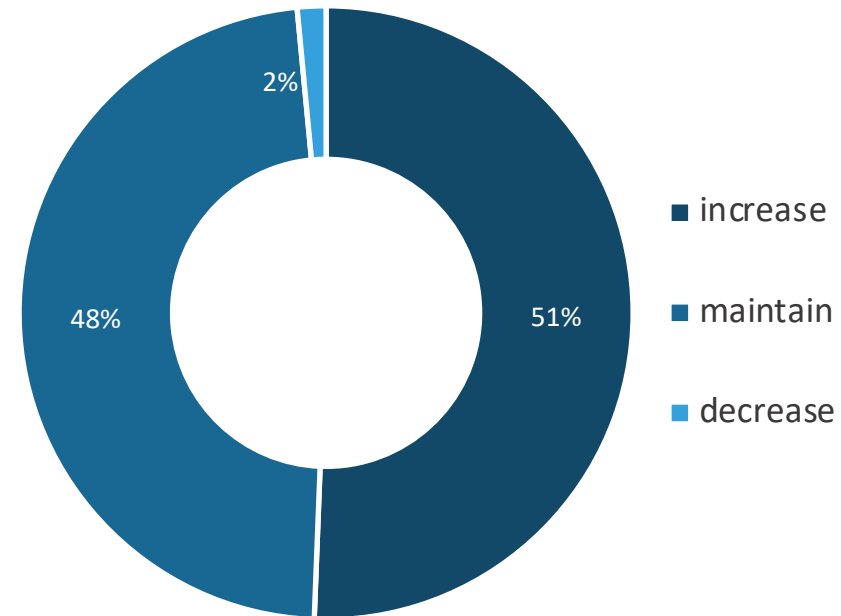
## Future UBC intentions – UK

*As answered by UK businesses*



## Future UBC intentions – EUROPE

*As answered by European businesses*



More than 90% of UK businesses that currently cooperate with universities plan to maintain or increase their cooperation, with only 4% intending to reduce it. This shows an important momentum for UBC in the UK.

European businesses also seem to be confident in their future intentions towards UBC as over half of them plan to increase their cooperation activities and only 2% to reduce it.

# Willingness to recommend UBC

The willingness of UK cooperating businesses to recommend to a colleague to engage in UBC highly varies depending on whether this cooperation is in research or in education.

They would willingly recommend UBC in research, as indicated by a "positive" Net Promoter Score of 10. They would not recommend UBC in educational activities, as indicated by a negative Net Promoter Score of -19.

The businesses in the UK are generally less satisfied with UBC than their European counterparts, although the same pattern of satisfaction with research activities and dissatisfaction with educational activities is maintained.

Respondents were asked how likely it would be that they recommend to a business colleague to engage in UBC in the areas of R&D and

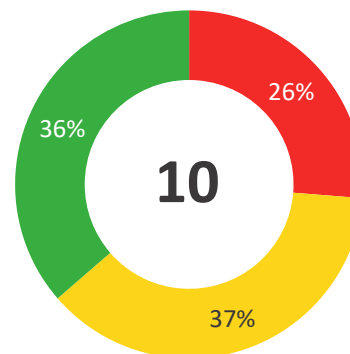
education and training (E&T). The *Net Promoter Score* metric offers a proxy for customer satisfaction.

## Willingness to recommend cooperation with universities in R&D or E&T

	Detractors	Passives	Promoters	Net promotor score
Business cooperating with universities in R&D	26%	37%	36%	10
Business cooperating with universities in E&T	46%	27%	27%	-19

## Satisfaction with cooperation with universities (Net Promoter Score)

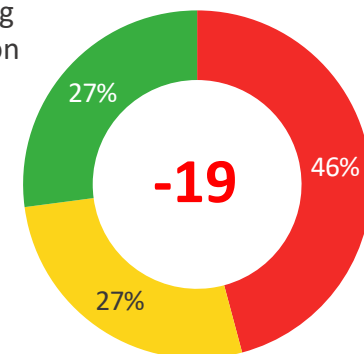
Business cooperating in research



■ Detractors ■ Passives ■ Promoters

European business NPS result: 28.2

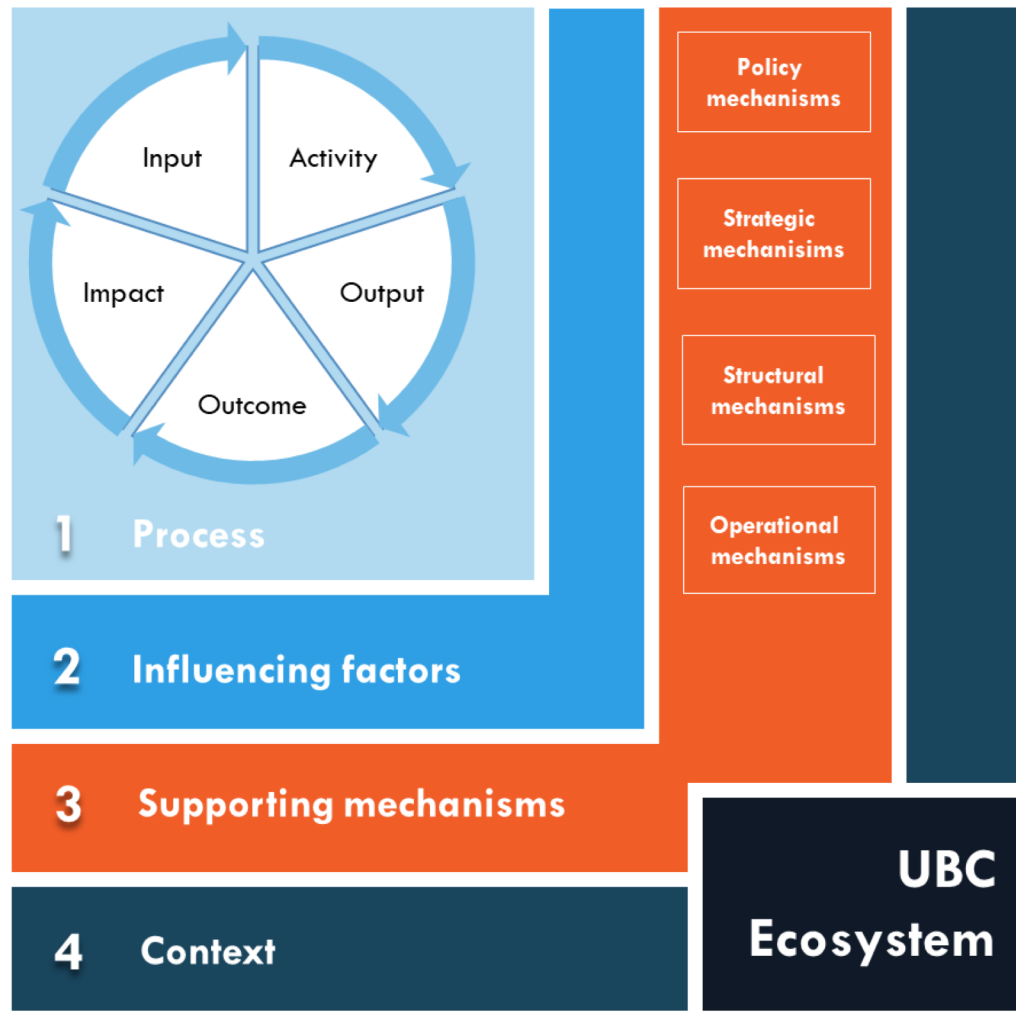
Business cooperating in education



■ Detractors ■ Passives ■ Promoters

European business NPS result: -2.1

# Supporting mechanisms for UBC



Supporting mechanisms are interventions designed to support the development of cooperation between HEIs and business.

There are four types of supporting mechanisms:

- Policy
- Strategic
- Structural
- Operational

This section outlines the extent to which UBC supporting mechanisms are developed in this sample from the HEI perspective.

At the European level, the extent of development of all these mechanisms significantly influences the extent of cooperation.

# Supporting mechanisms for UBC

Businesses in the UK can adopt a range of supporting mechanisms in their interaction with universities, but most of them are present in under a third the businesses.

The most developed mechanism for both groups is a top-level management committed to UBC, with a higher score for businesses in the UK (43%) than for their European counterparts (37%).

Presentations, lectures or mentoring within university and a strategy for UBC are the further mechanisms present.

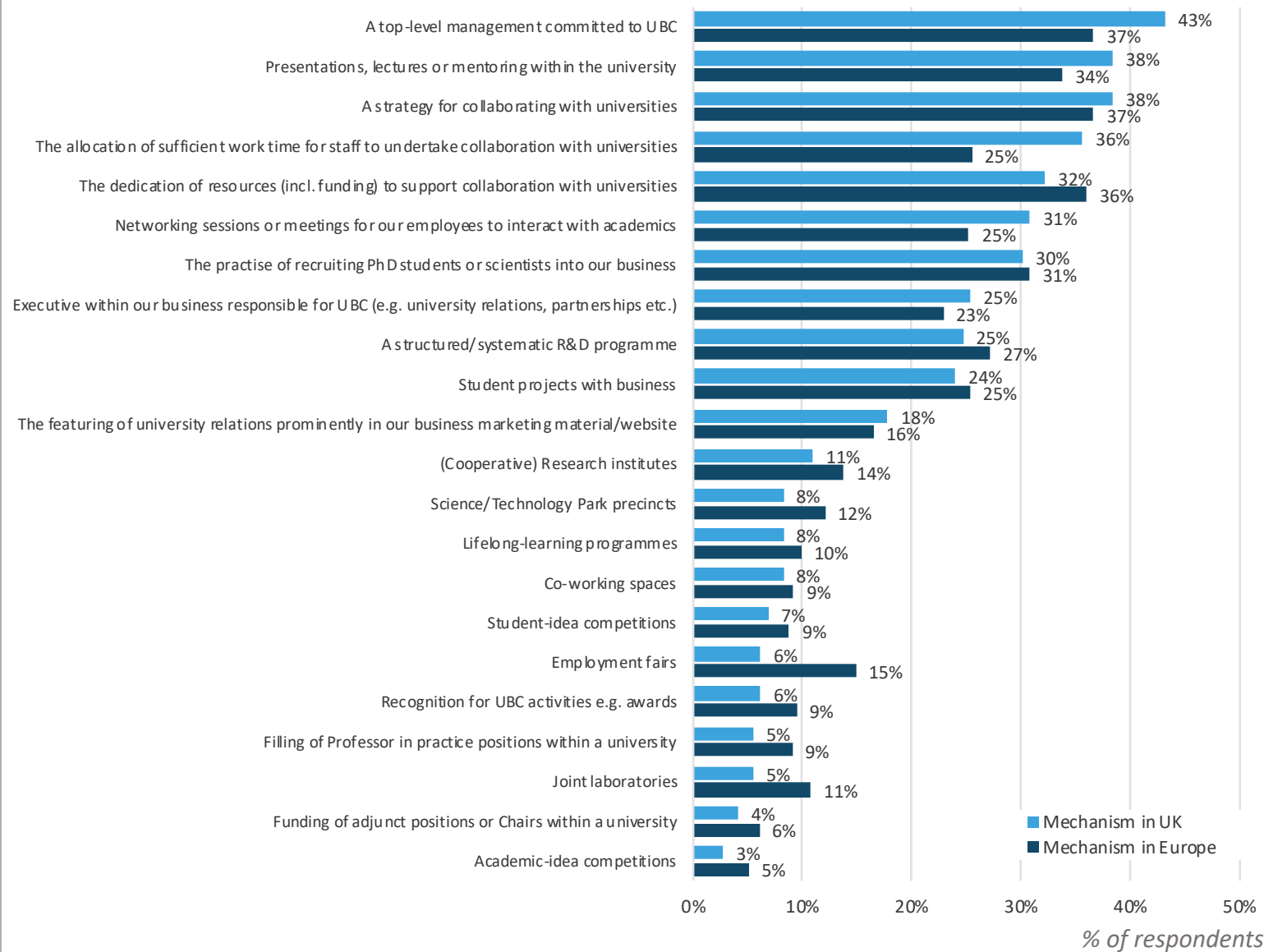
Particularly low in the UK compared to the EU average are the employment fairs and joint laboratories.

The most undeveloped mechanisms relate to the funding of adjunct positions and academic-idea competitions.

Overall, the UK needs to do more to support academic ideas generation. The latest Industrial Strategy mentions the important of entrepreneurship, including academic entrepreneurship but with no indication of what type of support is necessary to help this flourish.

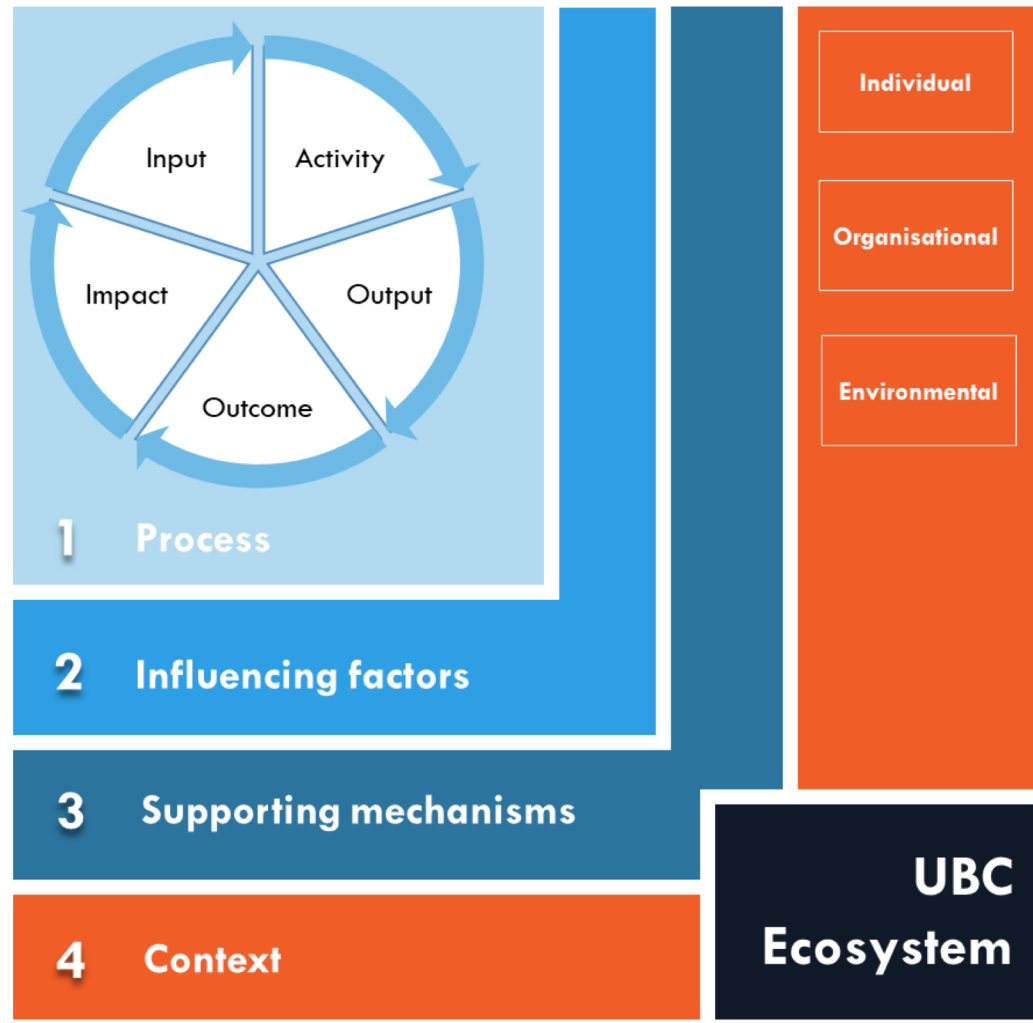
## Mechanisms supporting UBC

*'Do these supporting mechanisms for UBC exist in your business?'*





# Context



The degree to which UBC takes place is influenced by a set of elements present in the context of the organisation that cannot be changed in short term.

These include the characteristics of individual actors involved, the institutional factors relating to the university and business, as well as by a set of broader environmental factors (political, economic, social, technological, etc.).

This section outlines how some contextual factors influence UBC in the country.

# Context

The UK businesses cooperating with universities perceive their context similarly to their European counterparts.

The business innovation and R&D profile are seen as strong. Furthermore they recognise importance of human resources for their competitiveness. Businesses may recognise that the UK has invested in building a bedrock of human capital: programs such as STEM, for example, which aims at training generations of people with ready-to-work skills in science, technology, engineering and maths.

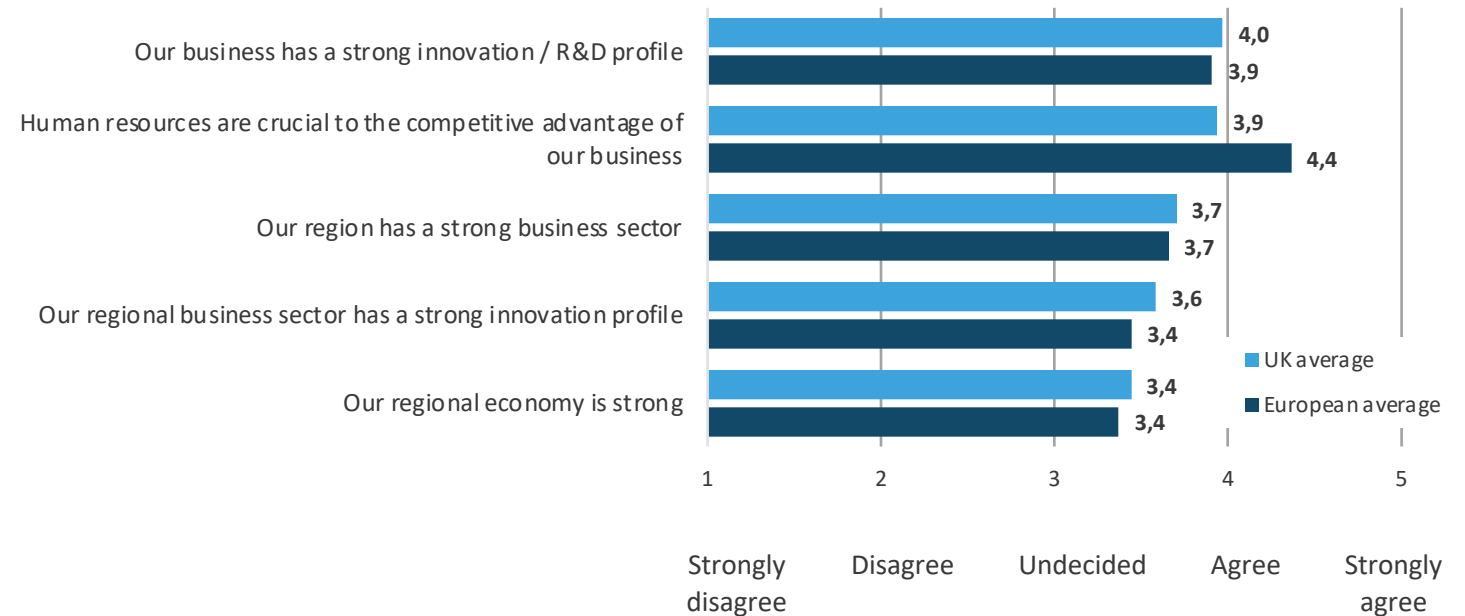
A lower perception emerges regarding the characteristics of the regional innovation profile and economy, indicating that, at local level, a more supportive context is required. There is great variability between regions, with some areas presenting very low R&D expenditures.

There have also been a number of changes on the UK business support landscape in recent years which may have hampered the perception of the local economy. However, the Government new Industrial Strategy (2017) sets out plans for boosting local economic growth<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> The Government of The United Kingdom. (2017). *Industrial Strategy. Building a Britain fit for the Future*. [White Paper]. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664563/industrial-strategy-white-paper-web-ready-version.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664563/industrial-strategy-white-paper-web-ready-version.pdf)

## Contextual factors affecting UBC

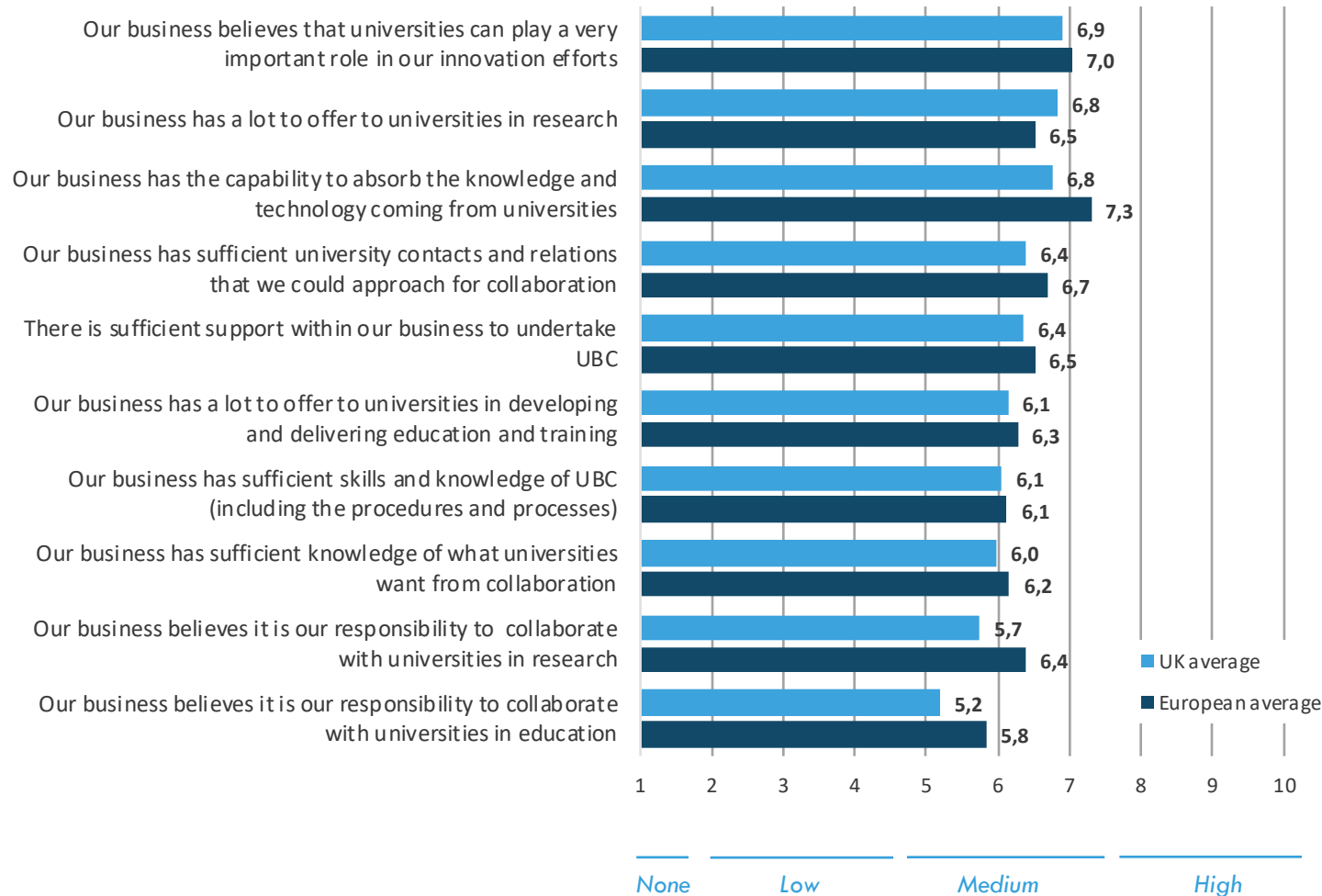
*'To what extent do you agree with the following statements?'*



# UBC capabilities and beliefs

## Supportive UBC environment

*How supportive are your organisation and environment for UBC?'*



Businesses in the UK perceive themselves as supportive towards cooperation with universities.

In particular they believe that universities play an important role in their innovation efforts.

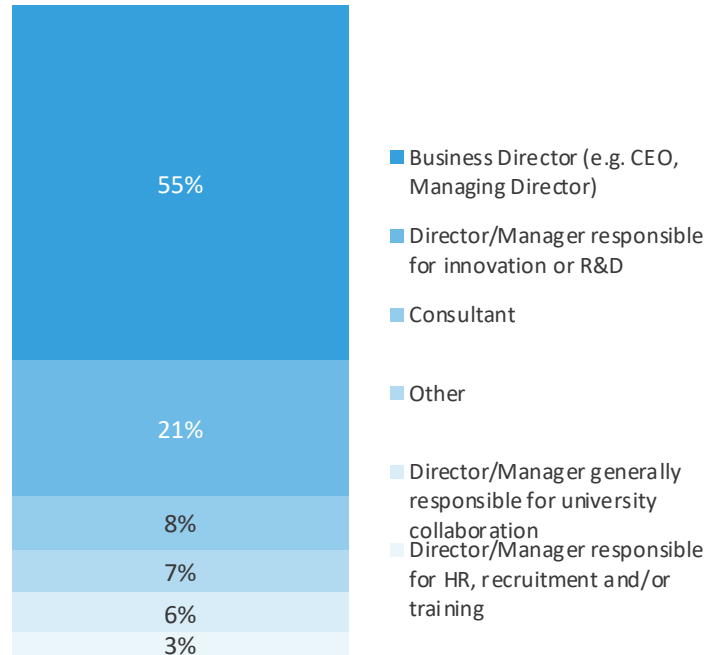
The UK businesses identified their strength in the capability of doing research with/for universities and absorbing knowledge they get from them.

Yet, UK businesses are less supportive towards UBC in education. One reason could be the lack of mechanisms in place to support the contribution of businesses in training and education, in order to develop an integrated offer for students. Besides, in education the gains for businesses may be less apparent and longer term than in R & D.

Overall, UK businesses perceive themselves slightly less capable in comparison to European average.

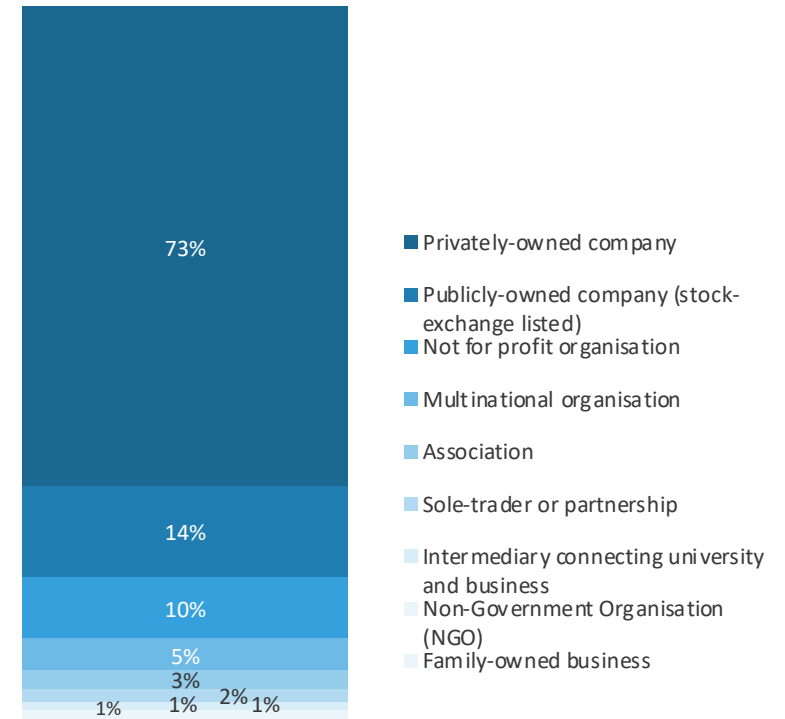
# Respondents profile

## Position of respondent



More than half of the UK business sample (55%) are business directors, which represent the largest group, followed by directors responsible for innovation or R&D (21%). The remaining respondents identified themselves as consultants (8%), directors responsible for university collaboration (6%), and directors of HR, recruitment and training (3%). 7% of business respondents hold 'other' positions.

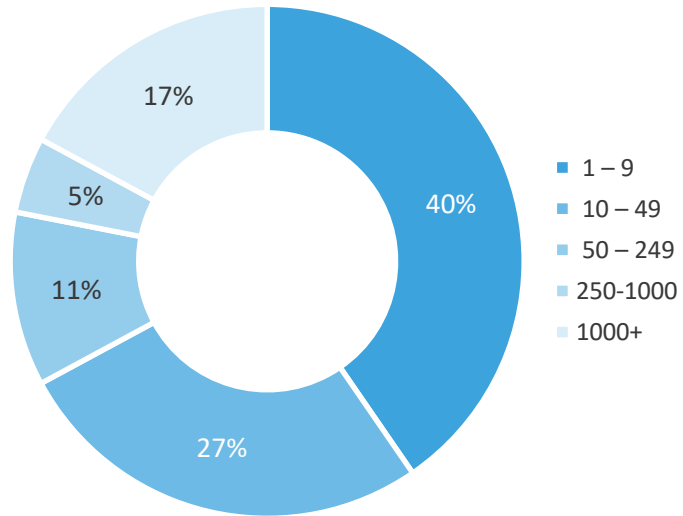
## Type of business



A wide variety of businesses were represented in the UK sample, with privately-owned companies forming the largest group (73%), followed by publicly-owned companies (14%) and not for profit organisations (10%). The type of businesses with less than 10% representation included multinational organisations, associations, sole traders, intermediaries connecting university and businesses, NGOs and family owned businesses.

# Respondents profile

## Business size



Sample Size	
UK business representatives	n = 146
European business representatives	n = 3.113

Over two thirds of the UK business sample (67%) is comprised by small firms (10 to 49 employees) and micro-sized companies. 11% work for medium-sized companies and large companies (250 to 1000+ employees) are represented by 22% of the business respondents.

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This report is part of the DG Education and Culture study on the University-Business Cooperation in Europe: drivers, challenges and opportunities in Europe EAC/10/2015. Further information can be found at [www.ub-cooperation.eu](http://www.ub-cooperation.eu)

This report is also part of the Global University-Business Monitor initiative, a global study into university engagement and cooperation between university and business. Further information can be found at [www.uni-engagement.com](http://www.uni-engagement.com)