

Institute of Education Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Strategy 2010- 2015

Our approach to Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer

The Institute's values and mission

Throughout its history, the Institute of Education (IOE) has believed in the potential of education and learning to transform the lives of individuals and communities. In acting upon this belief, the IOE attempts to live out certain values, particularly those of critical reason, social justice, openness and respect for persons. The IOE remains committed to these values and they inform all its activities, in relation to its staff and to its students and in its interactions with the wider community. It also values academic freedom, in order that the members of its community will be able – and, indeed, are encouraged – to engage openly in intellectual and public debate. The IOE seeks to be a diverse and cosmopolitan community that itself embodies these values.

The IOE's mission is to pursue excellence in education and related areas of social research and professional practice. In undertaking this mission, it adheres to the highest standards of academic rigour and seeks to make a positive contribution to the development of individuals, institutions and societies facing the challenges of change. To this end, the IOE engages in:

- Research and scholarship of national and international significance
- High quality, research-informed post-experience and postgraduate learning and teaching programmes
- The promotion of new ideas in policy and professional practice grounded in its research and teaching expertise
- Other services to support and develop the quality of educational systems and related fields of policy and practice.

The Institute's overriding goal is helping to improve quality of life for individuals and societies through our work in education and social research.

In support of this goal we are committed to:

- Undertaking research of all types, from basic research driven by our core values and undertaken without the expectation of immediate application to applied, often contract, research, with objectives that are often designed to make a difference to policy or professional practice in the short or medium term
- Sharing the findings of our research with practitioners and policy-makers and working with them to translate these findings into tools of practical use to user communities
- Sharing the findings of our research with academic audiences internationally, in the UK and within the IOE, including with our student community, ensuring that our taught curricula are informed by current research and active researchers
- Demonstrating academic excellence in our research, as judged by our external peers and others
- Making scholarly contributions to public engagement
- Ensuring the highest ethical standards in the conduct of our research.

Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer

Basic research, applied research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities are different aspects of the process of creating and sharing knowledge which is integral to the Institute's work. The stages are closely linked and may not always have clear boundaries between them: one project may include different research elements together with a variety of means of sharing findings with users, and reviewing their use and the usefulness of those findings. Another project may focus exclusively on one form of consultancy and knowledge transfer such as provision of consultancy advice or development of a bespoke professional development course. Some members of the IOE may be working on a variety of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities at any given time; others will focus on one particular type of activity for part or all of their time at the IOE.

The Institute needs to maintain administrative distinctions between activities, for example in order to meet its obligations in relation to VAT and its reporting requirements to the HEFCE. However, these distinctions should be recognised as administrative in nature rather than necessarily strategic. The IOE values each type of activity and seeks to maintain a balance between them whilst safeguarding both its reputation for academic excellence and public value and its financial sustainability.

The disciplines within which staff at the IOE undertake research, consultancy and knowledge transfer have broadened over the years and continue to increase while remaining within the fields of education and related areas of social science. Some indication of the range of activities is indicated by the names of the IOE's academic departments. The IOE's research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities draw on, and help to create, a very wide range of methodologies and embody multi-

and inter-disciplinary work as well as work that falls, whether basic or applied, within a single social science discipline.

Governance

The IOE has a Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Committee that maintains an overview of IOE Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer work and helps implement the IOE's Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Strategy. This Committee reports to Senate and nominates subcommittees and working groups as necessary to undertake its work. Each of the IOE's Faculties has a Faculty Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Committee that feeds into the IOE Research, Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer Committee.

Ethics

Ethical scrutiny of research, scientific integrity and good research governance are increasingly high-profile concerns to research funders and research organisations. Whilst these concerns are not limited to research involving human subjects, as a social science based institution we take our responsibilities in this area very seriously.

All staff and student research is required to undergo an ethics review before work starts. All our research is conducted with reference to the appropriate professional code of practice for social research. While sound governance of research is clearly essential, we also expect the highest possible standards from our researchers. Our ethics review processes are explicitly designed in order to promote a reflective and proactive approach to research ethics.

Organisation of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer

Research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activity, including externally funded projects and personal, indirectly funded research, is undertaken by staff in all our academic departments, and in some support departments. Each academic department has a distinct intellectual domain and balance of teaching, research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities. An increasing proportion of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects now involve staff from two or more departments.

Membership of IOE special interest groups (SIGs) in areas of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer is encouraged. These groups are informal, but comprise clearly identified groupings of staff, usually from more than one department, who discuss and share research ideas and findings, and some 18 groups exist in 2010/11. Focal points for emerging research areas and clustered consultancy and knowledge transfer activities within or across departments are provided through the development of internally designated (as well as funder-designated) Centres, which are normally larger than SIGs, include a significant commitment of staff time across a

number of people, and are backed by a development plan. There are 35 Centres in existence in 2010/11.

Supporting policies

- Research Governance and Ethics
- Centres and Groups

People

Current position and issues

Research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities, both externally-funded and IOE-funded, are undertaken by many members of our staff:

- Those whose work includes a mixture of teaching award-bearing courses, research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities
- Those whose work is primarily focused on externally funded research but may include some teaching and/or consultancy and knowledge transfer work
- Those whose work is primarily focused on externally funded consultancy and knowledge transfer projects but may include some teaching and/or research
- Those whose work primarily consists of supporting academic activities but may occasionally include consultancy and knowledge transfer work related to their area of professional practice.

We recognise the contribution made by each group of staff towards achieving our goals in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer.

Under the national framework agreement on pay and grading, we have two employment grading pathways: the *academic* pathway for those whose main role is teaching and/or research; and the *professional* pathway for those whose main role is not teaching or research. The first group includes those in permanent lecturing positions, those working mainly on externally-funded research projects, and those working on a single research project for a sustained period of time. The second group includes both those whose main role is supporting academic activity and those whose main role is leading and undertaking consultancy and knowledge transfer activities.

We acknowledge the separation of these pathways as a consequence of the framework agreement but seek to treat those whose main role is in consultancy and knowledge transfer equitably with those on the academic pathway wherever possible. We recognise the work undertaken by all staff active in research in achieving the IOE's goals. Except where differential treatment is appropriate to the

nature of particular roles, all staff engaged in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer should be treated equitably with regard to representation in governance structures, movement between academic and professional pathways in response to role evolution, reward and accountability, study leave, professional development and access to space and facilities suitable for their needs.

The IOE has rewarded different types of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activity, and different staff groups, in different ways throughout its history. Reward in this context includes: career progression on the academic pathway; access to funding to support academic development, including autonomous control of such funds; and additional payments to an individual.

We are working towards establishing a workload management system that aims to ensure reasonable equality of workload across all academic staff, that ensures academic staff are given an appropriate quantity of work and spend sufficient time on income-generating activities, and that supports enterprise, team-working and commitment and helps the IOE generate a 3% surplus each year. The system needs to work for all groups of staff involved in delivering research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activity, including those on professional contracts.

All organisations experience staff turnover. The IOE needs to have structures, systems, a culture and the reputation to encourage excellent staff to apply to join it and to enable existing staff to develop their capabilities to the greatest possible extent. Capacity building is likely to be of especial importance for the five years of this strategy. The IOE needs to ensure that as high a proportion of its academic staff as possible are working as independent researchers, attracting external funding, teaching at doctoral level and regularly producing outputs of international and, where possible, world-leading quality.

Staff have different development needs throughout their careers. The higher education sector has tended in recent years to focus on support for early-career researchers, especially as a result of the *Roberts Review* and consequent Research Council skills funding, but has not always focused to the same extent on other career stages and transition points. We recognise the need to provide different development opportunities at different times in the academic life-course and that different people reach different stages in that life-course after differing periods of time. It is particularly important in succession planning and in developing future project directors and heads of academic departments that suitable development is available.

From April 2011, funding for the career development and transferable skills training of researchers ('Roberts funds') will move from being distributed as ring-fenced payments to being part of the indirect costs of research, recoverable from all funders, with an indicative expectation that this amounts to £200 per grade 6-7 researcher per year. We recognise the importance of providing targeted development opportunities for this group of staff and ensuring they are enabled to take the time to undertake

such training and to gain experience, including of teaching, to benefit their future career progression.

Objectives

- As far as possible, ensure equity of treatment for all staff engaged in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities.
- Support the professional development of such staff at all stages of their career.

Key actions

- Review and where necessary revise current policies to ensure that all staff engaged in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer are treated equitably with regard to representation in governance structures, movement between academic and professional pathways in response to role evolution, reward and accountability, study leave, professional development and access to space and facilities suitable for their needs.
- Develop and implement a unified reward and accountability framework that recognises the contribution of different staff groups to achieving the IOE's goals, wherever possible harmonised across different types of activity, and which rewards behaviour that is most in line with current strategic goals.
- Support and encourage more staff to become independent researchers and, in time, to become principal investigators on externally funded research projects.
- Promote a range of forms of support to achieve the highest number of international quality and world-leading research outputs, including writing partnerships, access to critical feedback from senior academics and time for writing (including but not only study leave).
- Undertake work to identify different development needs throughout the academic life-course and how these might best be met, e.g. through traditional face-to-face workshops, one-to-one 'just-in-time' work, 'bite-size' sessions incorporated within departmental seminar and meeting programmes, provision of written guidance and ad hoc advice available on request.
- Implement a mentoring framework so that staff at different career stages can access informal mentoring, usually within the IOE, to support them with an identified need, such as dealing with new situations or making decisions at a career transition point. The framework should allow mentors' time in supporting colleagues to be acknowledged.
- Promote the creation of internal peer learning networks, e.g. a consultancy network for staff wanting to develop their skills and confidence as consultants.

- Review the financial arrangements for researcher development following the ending of ring-fenced 'Roberts funds', including for provision previously provided from these funds, and for other appropriate support.
- Promote a culture of mutual support and collegiality in achieving these objectives.

Indicators

- Age and grade distribution across main groups highlighted
- Staff satisfaction
- Staff turnover by groups highlighted
- Redundancies, partial redundancies and redeployment, by groups highlighted
- Proportion of staff on the academic pathway who are named principal or co-investigators/directors of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects
- Proportion of independent academic staff who are producing an average of one research output a year of international quality
- Proportion of independent academic staff who are producing an average of one research output every two years of world-leading quality
- Funded fellowships

Supporting policies

- Workload management system
- Reward policy
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Race Equality Policy
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme

Financial Position

Current position and issues

Engaging in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer work is critical to the IOE's mission and core to our academic work. Much – although by no means all – of this work is undertaken in the form of specific projects for a range of clients. Projects aim to combine the research interests and academic strengths of IOE with the needs and interests of funding agencies. In the period 2004/05 to 2009/10, growth in the number of such projects being undertaken increased the financial significance of

research, consultancy and knowledge transfer work within the IOE's overall financial position.

In 2009/10 research activity accounted for 35% of IOE income (QR 11%, projects 23%, other research-related income including capital grants 2%); consultancy and knowledge transfer activity accounted for 20% of IOE income (HEIF 1%, projects 9%, other consultancy and knowledge transfer-related income including capital grants 10%). Projects are primarily funded by UK public funders, through Research Councils, Whitehall departments, non-departmental public bodies and local and health authorities.

From 2004/05 to 2009/10 we experienced considerable growth in income from research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects, with income increasing from £17.5 million to £28.5 million over this period. In 2009/10, project income dropped by 22% compared with 2008/09, approximately half of which was due to the cyclic nature of the work of the Centre for Longitudinal Studies. However, the reduction is an early indicator of the difficult economic climate for higher education.

Public sector funding cuts, both those announced before CSR2010 and those anticipated subsequently, are likely to affect research budgets disproportionately. Agencies for which we have worked in the past are being closed down. Reduced endowment and donation income leaves charities and foundations with less to invest. Funds from our traditional UK public and charitable sector sources for future work will be scarcer, and to maintain our activities we will need to seek and obtain funding from new sources, most importantly the UK private sector and non-UK sources. For sustainability we must increasingly manage a mixed portfolio of funders and activity types, of levels of cost recovery and surplus generation, at IOE, faculty, departmental and individual level.

Full Economic Costing (FEC) is used as the costing basis for all research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects, using research estates and indirect cost rates for consultancy and knowledge transfer projects in the absence of robust TRAC consultancy and knowledge transfer data. More work is needed to establish a robust costing model for conferences, CPD courses and other activities which are paid for by individual participants. More work is needed across all activity areas to improve pricing, including understanding when we can charge more than FEC and how such decisions should be made.

Objectives

- Maximise future QR income by ensuring the best possible outcome of REF2014.
- Endeavour to maintain project income levels by diversifying funding sources away from UK public sector and by diversifying activities as necessary.

- Manage a mixed portfolio of projects to achieve cost recovery levels across the IOE of an average of 90% FEC for research and 110% FEC for consultancy and knowledge transfer.

Key actions

- Set annual targets, informed by past history and the need for culture change, for proportions of income from different funding sources including international funders and UK public sector funders, towards a target of 10-20% of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer project income by the end of the planning period from international funders, and 60-75% from the UK public sector.
- Provide guidance for all research, consultancy and knowledge transfer staff and training for heads of academic departments on the relationship between costing and pricing, approaches to pricing and how pricing decisions should be made
- Develop guidance on successful approaches to portfolio management at department and faculty level
- Invest in the Business Development Initiative to support diversification of funding
- Incorporate TRAC-KE into IOE TRAC work in order to establish estates and indirect costs rates for consultancy and knowledge transfer activity

Indicators

- Proportion of total IOE income from Research and from Consultancy and Knowledge Transfer
- Proportion of education QR awarded to the IOE
- Proportion of project funding from UK public sector, UK private sector, UK charitable sector and non-UK funders

Supporting policies

- Costing and Pricing

Investing in and developing the research, consultancy and knowledge transfer environment

Current position and issues

We receive funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to support research, consultancy and knowledge transfer in two streams, the QR stream for research and the sequential HEIF grants for consultancy and knowledge transfer. The present allocation of QR is driven by the results of the 2008

RAE and will continue to be so until the start of academic year 2015/16. It is used to support personal research time for staff on academic pathway grades 8 and above, including time working on research projects which is not fully funded because the funder pays less than FEC.

The sequential HEIF grants are used to fund specific initiatives agreed with HEFCE. The HEIF4 grant, ending in 2010/11, supports the London Education Research Unit, *London InstEd*, the Business Development Initiative and a series of development projects undertaken in 2009/10, and contributes towards a number of posts in Research and Consultancy Services and in faculties which have supporting consultancy and knowledge transfer activity within their remit. HEFCE is yet to set out future arrangements in relation to HEIF funding.

New developments in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer vary in scale and scope, and consequently in potential investment needed, from a few days for one individual to IOE investments in new strategic platforms involving a number of months of staff time across a group of people, together with travel and other costs. Research, consultancy and knowledge transfer work that is undertaken by individuals and not funded externally may be supported by personal research time, planned study leave, funds held in individual or group development accounts, and funds allocated from department or faculty budgets to support a particular piece of work, depending on the circumstances of the individual staff member and the investment required. Such investments should be agreed with the Head of Academic Department. Initiatives requiring input from a number of staff across departments or faculties and investment from centrally held funds (such as the Director's Strategic Fund) have historically been more difficult to plan and decision-making may take some months.

We have funded a series of IOE post-doctoral fellowships between 2003/04 and 2008/09, with 26 individual fellows appointed, for periods of between one and two years. Of these, 16 went on to further employment at the IOE following the conclusion of the fellowships. No fellowships were awarded in 2009/10, but we aim to reintroduce a post-doctoral fellowship scheme as soon as funds allow.

We will invest in a new Business Development Initiative from 2010/11. The Initiative aims initially to enable us to respond more quickly and effectively to funding opportunities, especially opportunities to access new markets and new clients. In the medium term the Initiative aims to enable us to be more effective in managing the interchange from research to consultancy and knowledge transfer (identifying potential 'uses' for research outcomes and supporting development of 'products' and services) and to be pro-active in marketing new offerings to clients.

As part of our approach to enabling staff to facilitate research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activity, 'development accounts' are opened in the name of individuals or groups, providing account holders with control of modest funds to

support academic development. Typical uses of such funds include attendance at conferences, professional development, purchase of laptops and other equipment, and undertaking modest pilot work in support of proposed new work.

Objectives

- Invest in future developments in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer in strategically important areas within our means in a planned and transparent way.
- Ensure we can respond promptly to new opportunities as they arise.

Key actions

- Bring into reality the Business Development Initiative, focusing initially on enhancing our ability to respond to non-traditional funding opportunities of strategic importance (e.g. international funders, new strategic platform areas) with cross-department teams. Review and streamline systems and procedures which appear to hinder our ability to respond quickly to funding opportunities.
- Review and clarify governance arrangements in relation to investment in research, consultancy and knowledge transfer especially in terms of cross-department and cross-faculty business planning.
- Develop for the use of any HEIF5 grant a strategy which combines continued investment in consultancy and knowledge transfer support posts both centrally and in the faculties, including the Business Development Initiative, with, if funding permits, new investment in initiatives in support of this strategy, in particular in the interchange from research to consultancy and knowledge transfer.

Indicators

- Number of additional projects, and the contribution they make to IOE finances, awarded following the endeavours of the Business Development Initiative
- Number of staff with active development accounts
- Number of IOE-funded post-doctoral fellowships

Supporting policies

- Development accounts
- Centres and Groups

Collaboration and clients: global, national, local

Current position and issues

We have an international reputation for the quality of our teaching and research. However, less than 10% of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer project funding comes from non-UK funders. Twenty-four per cent of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects underway during 2009/10 included a significant international element, such as fieldwork or course delivery, including a significant strand of activity using cross-national and comparative approaches. Much of this work is undertaken in collaboration with international partners: in the last ten years we have collaborated with universities in 24 of the 27 EU member states, and in 14 of 53 Commonwealth countries. We have a number of key international alliances, including the International Alliance of Leading Education Institutes, which have led to high-level meetings and position papers but few specific collaborative research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects. In order to sustain our international standing, and in the light of the likely UK economic position for 2010-2015, we aim to increase the proportion of our research, consultancy and knowledge transfer funding that is obtained from outside the UK.

We collaborate with over half of all UK universities and with a range of other partners, from research and policy institutes to museums and membership bodies on research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects. Our collaborations with the other Bloomsbury Colleges have increased in number, especially following the establishment with Birkbeck of the London Knowledge Lab in 2004 and the creation of the joint London International Development Centre in 2007. We do not anticipate any decrease in the proportion of collaborative activity and must ensure that relationships with collaborators, often continuing over a succession of projects, are effectively managed for mutual benefit.

Our location in London and our responsibilities to education professionals in London are important parts of our history and our future. London features strongly in our work with much of our fieldwork and project delivery taking place in it, but this is often because of our location rather than because of the distinctiveness of London. Little of our research is funded by London-focused bodies, although a greater proportion of consultancy and knowledge transfer projects are.

The London Education Research Unit (LERU) combines two roles: as a centre within LCLL it provides a focus for research within the department; and as an IOE-wide communication programme, funded by HEIF grants, it gathers and disseminates London-related research to London schools and agencies. It produces a range of publications, runs seminars and conferences and maintains its own website with data and summaries of and links to research findings relating to London education. There is scope for further developing LERU's role to make it truly IOE-wide.

The Centre for Post-14 Research and Innovation, while undertaking research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities at national and international levels,

also has a strong regional focus. The Centre provides conferences, seminars and various professional development activities in the area of post-14 education and training and lifelong learning for practitioners, policy-makers and researchers across London and the South East, working closely with London agencies, authorities and providers. Alongside LERU, the Centre is a key focal point for disseminating the IOE's London-focused research, consultancy and knowledge transfer work.

We are fortunate as a London-based organisation that many of our clients are also London-based and easily visited in the course of projects. However, this can mean that we fail to engage strategically in stakeholder relationship management. There is a risk of not keeping sufficiently in touch with some funders; with others there may be duplication of communication through too many contacts.

In a period of financial austerity, attempting to access new types and sources of funding will require us to work harder to engage with new clients and to maintain ongoing relationships with them to maximise the potential for further work.

Objectives

- Increase the proportion of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects which are either funded from outside the UK or involve international work or both.
- Identify and develop the distinctive features of London for our research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities.
- Actively manage relations with our clients and funders and explore new ways of engaging with them and keeping them informed about our work.

Key actions

- Increase the number of research, consultancy and knowledge transfer projects undertaken in collaboration with strategic international partners
- Provide clear guidance on financial, ethical, cultural, HR and other issues to consider when planning or undertaking international projects and incorporate this into appropriate staff development programmes.
- Map capacity and capability amongst staff to undertake work that is international in nature, and promote development opportunities to enhance such capabilities
- Foster a spirit of entrepreneurialism in staff, encouraging the development of new initiatives to share our academic expertise with potential clients
- As part of the development of the HEIF5 strategy, review the role, organisational location and funding for the London Education Research Unit and the Centre for Post-14 Research and Innovation
- Take a planned, strategic approach to stakeholder relationship management, including regular meetings with 'top ten' research, consultancy and knowledge

transfer funders, reviewing both the quality of work delivered and administrative aspects of working together

- Explore new forms of initial engagement for potential clients, such as open days organised around a theme within IOE's research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activity and development of packaged groups of services for specific market sectors. Continue to develop practitioner networks involving clients, collaborators and organisations that may take both roles.

Indicators

- Proportions of international-funded and international-based projects and income
- Proportions of projects and income funded by London-focused organisations
- Proportion of UK universities involved in active collaborations; numbers of other UK collaborators by organisation type
- Locations of collaborations: EU/non-EU
- Co-authorships beyond IOE including outside the UK

Supporting policies

- Collaboration

Sharing knowledge

Current position and issues

We host many of the best researchers in our field in the UK and our communication systems are configured to maximise research dissemination. We have an extensive communications infrastructure, including a central Marketing and Communications team and others in communication and event support roles in faculties. We have a range of distinctive publications, including *Bedford Way Papers*, *Issues in Practice*, *Perspectives on Education Policy*, *London InstEd*, LERU's *London Digest* and other outputs from IOE centres, projects and networks. Our Repository is increasingly used world-wide and enables many more users and others to access the publications authored by our staff. For many years IOE Publications has promoted the IOE through its peer-reviewed academic titles and other publications and this will be enhanced by the forthcoming launch of IOE Press.

However, research dissemination is significantly different from both 'user engagement' and 'impact', as now defined, promoted and rewarded by the funding and research councils. A key to research impact in the social sciences is seen as user engagement and the sharing of practical and analytic knowledge. In this regard, IOE researchers and units have very extensive user networks, but these are often

personal and non-transferable. A major issue is thus how the collective strength of the institution can be built by appropriately harvesting available knowledge and relationships with users. Contemporary issues often call for integrated approaches and we have to continue to work on ways of developing liaison, analysis and added value across, between and within our academic structures. We need to increase the number of trained and confident colleagues willing to engage with the media so that major fields of contemporary controversy are covered more systematically.

Diversity of communication vehicles can be seen as a strength in reaching particular audiences appropriately, but there is also a place for a degree of standardisation in research project information, as for course provision. For example, provision of user-friendly descriptions of project plans and of major findings (the latter perhaps in the form of research briefings) could provide dissemination material for both internal and external uses.

Increased internal visibility also has a developmental potential, enabling the work of colleagues to be seen more holistically and thus contextualising highly rated outputs for submission to REF. The 2014 exercise is expected to continue to foreground research culture and capacity building provision, as well as impact and research quality itself. An increased internal flow of information, and continuing opportunities to work together, is likely to support authentic cooperation. To counter the risk of fragmentation which is endemic to such a complex organisation, and to maximise chances of synergies becoming apparent, we need to optimise internal communication and opportunities to interact for authentic purposes.

The use of new technologies is growing within the IOE and we are fortunate to have leading research teams in ICT and its applications. The use of communication technologies for interaction with users and for dissemination of research findings will undoubtedly be a significant priority for future development in alignment with targeted print distribution.

The IOE directly supports key organisations within the field, including BERA and UCET. Additionally, we offer membership of a range of practitioner networks to individuals, learning institutions from nurseries to universities, local authorities, voluntary and professional bodies and other organisations. Membership brings: invitations to attend IOE seminars, book launches and other free events; copies of network newsletters, *London InstEd* and other publications; opportunities to participate in projects; and discounts on charged-for events and other services. There is likely to be potential to extend the range of practitioner networks across our range of activity areas.

Objectives

- Maximise the impact of our research, consultancy and knowledge transfer work by engaging actively and consistently with users.

- Refocus our communications structures and systems to promote effective engagement.

Key actions

- Include within the Marketing and Communications strategy provision to support both authentic user engagement *and* effective dissemination systems, ensuring a clear and coherent map of publications and intended audiences
- Develop more internal processes for sharing research information and for developing theoretical, methodological and substantive synergies. And further, to develop ways of integrating available knowledge so that it can be applied to contemporary issues.
- Develop agreement on, and implement, a standard expectation for research project and findings summaries for use by communication specialists and other colleagues. Develop ways of managing and maximising the use of such outputs internally.
- Increase the number of trained and confident colleagues willing to engage with the media and co-ordinate media engagement across the IOE
- Implement a single, comprehensive customer relationship management system to manage engagement with and dissemination to research users and interested academics in London, the UK and internationally. Develop expertise in the use of such a system, to maximise the benefit gained from it.
- Develop the use of our external-facing website and newer technologies for both engaging and interacting with users and for dissemination purposes.
- Maintain our links with other organisations within the fields of education and social practice, policy and research both within London, the UK and internationally.
- Develop the number and range of practitioner networks ensuring consistency of offering, pricing, branding and administration. Use these networks to enable targeted dissemination of research news.

Indicators

- Number of media appearances (national and international)
- Income from and number of secondments
- Number of downloads from IOE Repository
- Proportion of IOE outputs available as full text in Repository
- Income from and volume of sales by IOE Press
- Number of instances of our work affecting policy in a desired manner

Supporting policies

- Intellectual Property

Support systems and activities

Current position and issues

Responsibility for frontline support for research, consultancy and knowledge transfer rests principally with staff located in Research and Consultancy Services (RCS) and in RCKT support teams in faculties. Investment in specialist support led to the creation of RCS in 2007/08 to provide technical expertise on contractual and ethical matters as well as financial administration. The creation of faculties at the same time led to the creation of teams of RCKT administrators, generally allocated to support specific departments. Together RCS and the faculty teams aim to provide practical support, especially with the preparation of funding proposals and the management of projects, and to ensure compliance with IOE, funder and other stakeholder regulations.

There is pressure to reduce the costs of supporting research, consultancy and knowledge transfer relative to the direct costs of undertaking it. The Research Councils UK (RCUK) and Universities UK (UUK) report *Financial Sustainability and Efficiency in Full Economic Costing of Research in UK Higher Education Institutions* recommends a reduction in the level of indirect costs funded from new Research Council projects of 5% per year from 2011/12 for three years. The recommended reduction for the IOE may be higher, as our rates are currently in the upper quartile for the sector.

At the same time, it is likely that increased competition for funding and increased accountability requirements on funders will make funding more difficult to obtain and will require more effort at every stage of the process, from looking more widely for opportunities through more detailed requirements regarding the content of proposals to more detailed contract negotiations to greater accountability requirements. Every system and process must be reviewed for maximum efficiency in the light of these contradictory pressures.

Process Reviews undertaken with SUMS Consulting in 2009/10 provide the basis for standard operating procedures and performance standards for research, consultancy and knowledge transfer support. However, improvements in efficiency can continue to be made through reducing duplication of effort and overlap of activity with other support areas, reducing exceptional circumstances requiring additional support and by institutional agreement on satisfactory performance standards.

Some efficiency gains will be made through improvements in electronic systems. In August 2011, Works and Assets for Research will enhance project financial reporting to budget-holders and funders, enabling prompt billing and improved financial control and decision-making, at reduced processing cost. In 2011/12 we hope to procure a new research management information system (RMIS) to replace PRECIS and integrate with several of our core corporate systems, providing an improved user

experience, better management information and new functionality, at reduced processing cost.

Although we have multiple relationships with our clients, thanks in part to our London base, we do not engage strategically in stakeholder relationship management. There is a risk of not keeping sufficiently in touch with some funders; with others there may be duplication of communication through too many contacts. In terms of the dissemination of outputs, although IOE branding is generally established, overlaps in mail and electronic distribution are possible and so too are omissions. We need to professionalise our use of databases and information systems concerning those with an interest in our work. In commercial terms, a customer relationship management (CRM) system is required to integrate the diverse knowledge which exists and to convert it into a practical resource to use on behalf of the organisation as a whole.

To support our abilities to respond to new funding opportunities in a timely way, we need an effective online directory of experts and we hope this will be addressed through the RMIS project.

Objectives

- Provide efficient and cost-effective support for research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activity.
- Ensure compliance with stakeholder regulations and protect the interests of the IOE.

Key actions

- Establish a flexible research, consultancy and knowledge transfer support structure that is adaptable to the needs of a changing external funding environment
- Review the need for, and efficiency of, support systems and processes focusing on defined compliance requirements, and determine appropriate levels of quality of support to meet the reasonable needs of service users. Ensure that these support needs and compliance requirements are met as cost-effectively as possible.
- Use the implementation of Works and Assets for Research to enhance project financial reporting, improve financial control and reduce processing cost
- Procure a new research management information system (RMIS) to replace PRECIS
- Improve the quality of centrally held and locally accessible contact information on all research, consultancy and knowledge transfer clients, collaborators, users and fieldwork sites through a single comprehensive customer relationship management (CRM) system, integrated with other IOE corporate systems where appropriate.

- Investigate systems and processes which can be changed and improved to facilitate collaboration with universities and other types of organisations in the design and delivery of IOE research, consultancy and knowledge transfer programmes
- Review our TRAC return in detail to ensure costs are correctly attributed between Research and Other (including consultancy and knowledge transfer) in order to return to second or third quartile rates

Indicators

- Achievement of performance standards set in RCKT support service provision statements
- Cost of RCKT support and of financial administration per pound of RCKT income
- TRAC indirect costs rates