

Centre for Public Policy for the
Regions' Network on the Overall
Impact of HEIs on Regional
Economies



Interim Progress Report
March 2006

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1. Network Background, Aims and Objectives

1.1 This is an interim report on the ESRC network award: *Centre for Public Policy for the Regions' Network on the Overall Impact of HEIs on Regional Economies*. The award is held by the Centre for Public Policy for the Regions (CPPR), a joint research institute of the Universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow, with the named award holder being Professor Peter McGregor. (In fact there are eight co-applicants, all professors in one of the two universities.) The network award covers the period 1 February – 31 July 2006.

1.2 The CPPR network aimed to establish an active and dynamic, multi-disciplinary network that is focussed on:

The overall, or system-wide, impact of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on regional economies

1.3 The network's content is primarily associated with the Theme 5 identified by the ESRC (*The impact of HEIs on international and trans-regional interactions*) as well as including issues arising from ESRC Themes 1 (*The characteristics of flows of knowledge through research, knowledge transfer and related activities*) and 3 (*The economic competitiveness and attractiveness of places*.) The original network proposal had highlighted that exploration of gaps in extant knowledge relating to the overall impact of HEIs on regional economies would inevitably involve some elements of theme cross-cutting. This was felt to be a strength rather than a weakness, since it was considered that the adoption of an holistic approach would be more likely to assist in identification of areas where further research could be productive.

1.4 The Network's key objective, as outlined in the original proposal, is:

- To uncover gaps in extant knowledge of the overall impact of HEIs informed by:
 - an appreciation that this requires an understanding of the mechanisms and processes by which HEIs impact on regional economies (elements of themes 1 and 3 identified by ESRC)
 - network members' initial familiarity with relevant theoretical and empirical analyses
 - the network's literature review, conducted to provide the strongest possible evidence base to support our gap analysis.

1.5 In order to achieve the key objective the network team had proposed to establish a network with multidisciplinary and cross-boundary membership, including academics and policy professionals. It was intended that the network would be open and inclusive; as well as encouraging the participation of younger researchers, it would seek to stimulate dialogue between academic experts and non academic professionals on key policy issues relating to HEIs in regional economies. Network activities would include:

- the hosting of an initial meeting and final conference at which a range of perspectives on current gaps in knowledge would be discussed by network members and invited speakers
- the establishment of a *Virtual Forum* to help support the cross-disciplinary discussion and dialogue between academic experts and policy professionals as well as facilitating remote collaboration between network members.

1.6 Envisaged outputs to the Network award included:

- The output from a lively virtual forum.
- An analysis of the gaps in our knowledge of HEIs' overall impact on regional economies in the UK, drawn from:
 - A focussed literature review
 - Interaction on a live virtual forum
- A final project report providing a fuller analysis of the gaps.
- A final conference with an invited range of speakers
- At least one multidisciplinary, policy-relevant, academically rigorous proposal to the subsequent initiative will be generated.

2. Progress towards achieving project objectives

Establishment of dynamic multi-disciplinary and cross-boundary 'knowledge network.'

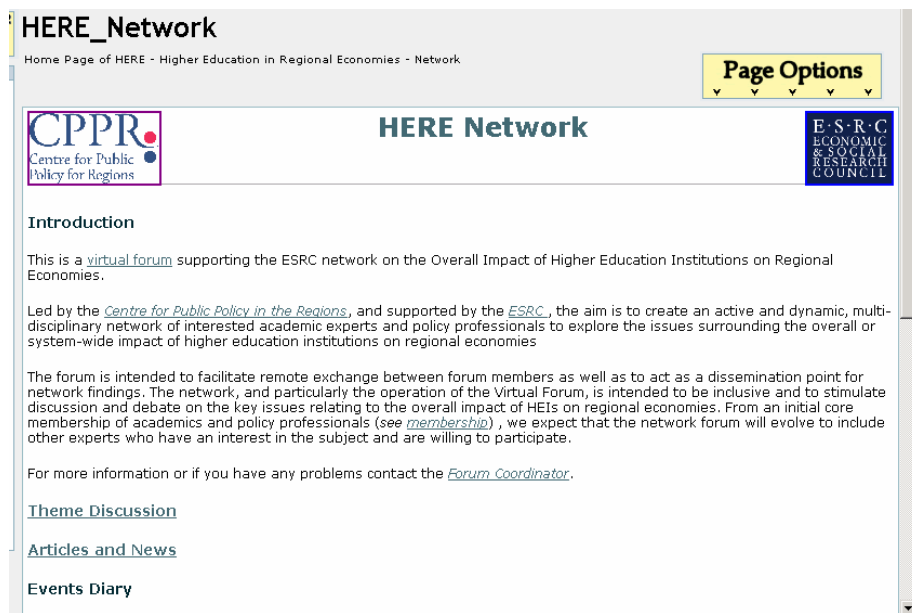
2.1 Significant progress has been made towards the creation of an inclusive and open 'knowledge network'. Membership of the network (as at 28th March 2006) currently stands at 54 people, including :

- 30 academics and 6 academic-related staff from 9 different HEIs.
- 18 external policy professionals from 10 different organisations, including Government departments, regional development agencies and higher education sectoral bodies

2.2 Network membership is rapidly expanding as the network's existence is publicised and more interested individuals are seeking to participate. A list of current membership is included in Appendix 1.

Creation of Virtual Forum to support network dialogue, collaboration and remote exchange

2.3 The **HERE (Higher Education in Regional Economies) Virtual Forum** has been created and all network members are registered to access the forum.



2.4 The Virtual Forum encompasses a website 'front page' with 'wiki' technology-based virtual collaboration tools. This provides a central collaborative workspace, including the capacity for participants to contribute and interact remotely in real time. Facilities currently include discussion forums for each of the identified theme strands, shared workspace for network sub-groups, the capacity for real time conferencing and archived video-streaming of group discussions. An important feature of the Forum which differentiates it from an ordinary website is that registered members can upload material directly rather than being obliged to go through a 'webmaster'.

2.5 The Forum is being actively facilitated and participants are being encouraged to contribute ideas, articles, and discussion topics. It is hoped that this tool will encourage productive exchange as well as acting as a repository and dissemination point for network outputs.

HERE - Knowledge Transfer Issues

HERE - Knowledge Transfer Issues

Forums->HERE - Knowledge Transfer Issues

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type	title	replies	reads	pts	last post	author
	Critical Literature	0	1	0.00	Tue 28 of Mar, 2006 [12:40]	Kean Birch
	Knowledge Transfer - some literature	0	5	0.00	Mon 27 of Mar, 2006 [13:05]	Donald McDellan

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entral forum for the HERE project

ms->HERE

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title	replies	reads	pts	last post	author
Report on the July 2005 HEIs in the economy seminar	0	9	0.00	Wed 22 of Mar, 2006 [18:05]	Ursula Kelly
Impact of HEI's on Regional Growth	0	10	0.00	Mon 20 of Mar, 2006 [23:35]	Richard Harris
Welcome	0	5	0.00	Mon 20 of Mar, 2006 [22:21]	Diane McDonald

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Initial Network Meeting

2.6 The inaugural network seminar was held on Thursday 23rd March 2006 and was attended by c. 35 Network participants. A copy of the seminar programme is included in Appendix 2. Chaired by the Director of the CPPR Professor Richard Harris, the seminar included a presentation on some of the issues relating to higher education and regional economies from a policy perspective (Carl Bow, Director of Relationship Management, Scottish Enterprise). It also included the presentation of an overview of the aims and objectives of the network and presentation of an initial gap analysis together with a series of workshops on sub-themes (HEIs and regional growth, knowledge transfer and graduate labour market issues) associated with the overall network theme. Copies of the key presentations made are attached as Appendix 3.

2.7 The plenary presentations and the final feedback session were videoed and have been made available on videostream from the Virtual Forum, particularly for those members who could not attend the seminar. Written summaries of key points raised in the workshop were also undertaken by some of the young research members of the network and these have also been made available on the Virtual Forum.

2.8 The Seminar participants agreed ways forward, including using the virtual forum to post topics for discussion and share links to relevant literature to assist the literature review

coordinators. Some network members also suggested extending invitations to participate to key members of sectoral business/industry bodies and this is in hand.

Focussed literature reviews

2.9 Senior members of the network are coordinating input to a number of literature reviews covering areas of relevance to the network's main theme. Additional research assistance has been secured from an experienced researcher with knowledge and interest in higher education and the economy issues – the researcher is providing cross-cutting support to the senior network members, in addition to the input from other interested researchers and network members.

3. Ongoing work schedule and next milestones

3.1 The next stage of the network's activities is to follow up all of the areas highlighted as worthy of further exploration during the inaugural seminar discussions or in the ongoing dialogue via the Virtual Forum.

3.2 The next network milestone is the submission to the ESRC of an interim gap analysis, with initial network findings. It is intended that this report be submitted to the ESRC by 1 May in order to assist the ESRC in its deliberations on the specification of the future research initiative. It is intended that the report will include a fuller account of the outputs of the inaugural seminar, combined with the preliminary gap analyses arising from the focussed literature reviews. (While submission of the interim gap analysis may not be specified as a contractual requirement, the network members had understood from the initiative's preparatory ESRC seminar, held at Glasgow University in December 2005, that the ESRC is interested in being kept informed of research gap analyses findings as soon as possible. Of course, the appendices to this report contain our initial gap analysis, which we are now in the process of refining.)

3.3 A further network milestone will be a full network conference, currently planned for the second part of June. It is intended that this conference will be a high profile event, and will focus on highlighting the issues uncovered by the network.

3.4 The network forum will continue in active operation throughout the period of the network award, with periodic meetings of smaller groups of interested network participants.

3.5 No problems are currently envisaged in meeting the ESRC requirements for the final submission of a full report on the network's literature reviews and identified gap analyses by 15 August 2006.

4. Additional comments and issues arising

4.1 It has already become clear through network member discussion that there is considerable interest across the full range of stakeholder communities in the pursuit of further research on issues relating to HEIs in regional economies. It may be noted that the active interest and engagement of a wide range of stakeholders may mean that virtual forum network discussion expands to cover areas additional to those which are the primary focus of the initiative. For instance there has already been considerable interest expressed in HEIs' cultural impact and engagement with surrounding regional communities.

4.2 However, the team see these discussions as an additional bonus to inform understanding and to help continue to engage widespread stakeholder interest. Wide-ranging network discussion will not, however, deflect from the delivery of the focussed outputs agreed in the network proposal. There is widespread enthusiasm in the network for continuing discussions and complete conviction that there is a lot of very exciting research on HEIs that remains to be done.

4.3 It is worth noting that the evolution and usage of the virtual forum will be separately evaluated in order to assess its value and utility as a tool to support collaborative and remote working. The findings of this evaluation will also be made available to the ESRC.

HERE Network Membership

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Please email the [forum co-ordinator](#) to have your biog details added.

Scotland - Universities of Strathclyde and Glasgow

Professor Richard Harris, Director, CPPR, University of Glasgow
[Details](#)

Professor Brian Ashcroft, CPPR and Policy Director, Fraser of Allander Institute, Department of Economics, University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Kean Birch, Research Fellow, CPPR, University of Glasgow

Professor Ron Botham, Professor of Entrepreneurship and Regional Development, Training & Employment Research Unit, University of Glasgow

Peter Booth, Director, Graduate School of Environmental Studies, University of Strathclyde

Alex Christie, Research Fellow, CPPR, University of Strathclyde
[Details](#)

Professor Forbes Gibb, Dept of Computing & Information Science, University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Barbara Graham, Director, Careers Service, University of Strathclyde

Martin Ferry, Research Fellow, EPRC, University of Strathclyde

Nigel Kay, Information Resources Directorate, University of Strathclyde

Ursula Kelly Assistant Director (Policy & Communications), Information Resources Directorate, University of Strathclyde [Details](#),

Professor Derek Law, Librarian and Head of Information Resources, University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Vivian Leacock, Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow

Diane McDonald, Advanced Systems Development Manager, Information Resources Directorate, University of Strathclyde

Alison McFarlane, Deputy Director, Research and Consultancy Services, University of Strathclyde

Professor Alan McGregor, CPPR and Director, Training & Employment Research Unit, University of Glasgow

Alasdair McKay, Head of Business Development, Research and Consultancy Services, University of Strathclyde

Professor Peter McGregor, CPPR, Fraser of Allander Institute and Research Director, Department of Economics, University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Donald McLellan, Researcher, University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Emeritus Professor Iain McNicoll University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Dr Vlad Mykhnenko, Research Fellow, CPPR, University of Glasgow

Heather Phillips, Research Fellow, CPPR, University of Strathclyde

Dr Maria Plotnikova, Research Fellow, CPPR, University of Strathclyde

Professor Kim Swales, CPPR and Research Director, Fraser of Allander Institute, University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Lisa Tole, Department of Economics, University of Strathclyde

Dr Katherine Trebeck, Research Fellow, CPPR, University of Glasgow

Professor Ivan Turok, CPPR and Research Director, Urban Studies, University of Glasgow [Details](#)

Professor Robert Wright, Department of Economics, University of Strathclyde [Details](#)

Other Scotland network members:

Carl Bow, Director, Relationship Management, **Scottish Enterprise**

Stephen Broad, Research Lecturer, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama [Details](#)

Richard Cairns, Head of Economic and Social Initiatives, **Development & Regeneration Services**, Glasgow City Council

Dr Andrew Goudie, **Chief Economic Adviser**, **Scottish Executive**

Verenna Hachmann, School of the Built Environment, Heriot Watt University

John Ireland, Head of **Analytical Services**, Scottish Executive (Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Dept)

Professor Charlie Jeffery, University of Edinburgh [Details](#)

Kevin Kane, Senior Manager, Strategic Projects & Partnerships, **Scottish Enterprise Glasgow**

Claire Kenny, Research Officer, Universities Scotland

Charles Marriott, Universities Scotland

Robin McAlpine, Public Affairs Manager, Universities Scotland [Details](#)

Ann Millar, Assistant Director (Research) **Scottish Funding Councils for Further and Higher Education**

Duncan Neish, Strategic Projects & Partnerships , Scottish Enterprise Glasgow

Fiona Robertson, Senior Economic Advisor and Head of the **Office of the Chief Economic Advisor**, Scottish Executive

Kenneth Wardrop, Economic Development Manager, City of Edinburgh Council

Charlie Woods, Director Strategy and Chief Economist, **Scottish Enterprise**

Other UK Regions:

London

Tony Bruce, Director of Policy, [Universities UK](#)

Fiona Armstrong, ESRC

Helen Mansfield, Policy Adviser, Universities UK

Anna Marshall, ESRC

Dan Reiser, Data Analyst, Policy Development Directorate, [Universities UK](#)

Leticia Veruete-McKay, Greater London Authority Economics ([GLA Economics](#))

West Midlands

Professor Jim Love, Aston Business School, University of Aston
[Details](#)

Professor Stephen Roper, Aston Business School, University of Aston
[Details](#)

Wales

Professor Steve Hill, Head of Research, Business School, University of Glamorgan
[Details](#)

Northern Ireland

Victor Hewitt, Director, ERINI (Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland)
[Details](#)

International

Professor Phil McCann, (Waikato, New Zealand)