

УКРАЇНСЬКА АСОЦІАЦІЯ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ І ДОСЛІДНИКІВ  
ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ ІНТЕГРАЦІЇ

**ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКІ ІНТЕГРАЦІЙНІ ПРОЦЕСИ У ХХІ СТОЛІТТІ:  
КЛЮЧОВІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ, ОСНОВНІ ВИКЛИКИ ТА НОВІ  
МОЖЛИВОСТІ**

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**UNIVERSITY-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS: KEY LESSONS LEARNED  
FROM THE EU EXPERIENCE**

*Summary.* Various forms of university-business partnerships have come to life in the last few decades of the XX century, fostering knowledge transfer and innovation. Since then, the relation between higher education institutions and business structures has been in the debate for a long period of time. Obviously, such discussions facilitate more profound learning of the EU experience in the sphere of the university-business partnerships development. That is why the overall purpose of the given paper is to put everyone in the picture about the economic essence of the main types of these partnerships and to the search of the main benefits and barriers of their development through sustainable management practices. It is defined by authors that in the present-day context most European universities evolve from teaching and research activities only to a commercialization process, where the partnership with business structures may be one of the important elements. Therefore, it is obviously that such kind of cooperation combines a set of the following elements: human resource involved to the essential intellectual property rights, the legal aspects in contracts, funding start-ups and spin-offs, the basic communication processes and a required promotion of the common projects.

*Key words:* academic mobility, EU countries, innovation, research, student mobility, university-business partnership.

University-business partnerships has been a subject of debate for a relatively long period of time, on the issue of how to achieve the global competitiveness of the countries in the EU, as well as to attain a set of Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the years, facilitating and strengthening university-business collaboration initiatives has involved the formation of a wide range of new facilities, in particular so-called “technology transfer offices”, responsible for the commercialization of research that takes place in a certain higher education institution, or “research and development units” within universities directly. The above-mentioned facilities have been often proactively encouraged by EU policy frameworks. At the same time, the main regional government bodies of the European Union have supported many initiatives necessary to create intermediary bodies in order to act as a catalyst between universities and business structures to motivate their effective collaboration.

Initiatives undertaken in this direction allow making an assumption that European universities need to do more to engage with business structures to create various innovative products and services. Nevertheless, the formation of any future policy arising from these debates should be based on better understanding of the nature of the existing university-business partnerships in the EU countries. That is why the given study will take a fresh look at the determination of the role of university-business partnerships in innovation, research and development.

University-business partnerships have developed rapidly as a result of dynamic processes that occur in business and academic research sphere, as well as the influence of government policies on innovation and technological advance. According to Ranga, M., Perälampi, J. and Kansikas, J. [1, p. 602], most business organizations intensified partnerships with universities not only to share increasing risks and costs, but also to meet ever-greater needs for external knowledge and technology arising from high competition in international product markets. In its turn, European universities strengthened their links with business structures in response to funding pressures caused by declining government funding and changes in university financing pattern.

Nowadays any university-business partnership is related to solving urgent business problems, development of innovations in various fields or supporting

prospective academic research projects [2]. These partnerships are transforming from a duo relationship between higher education institutions and business structures to a trio “university-business-government” relationship, contributing to social and economic improvement at the regional and national levels. Consequently, university-business partnership should be considered as an important activity in developing a knowledge society of individuals.

As practice shows, there are several types of university-business partnerships in the EU countries (See Figure 1).

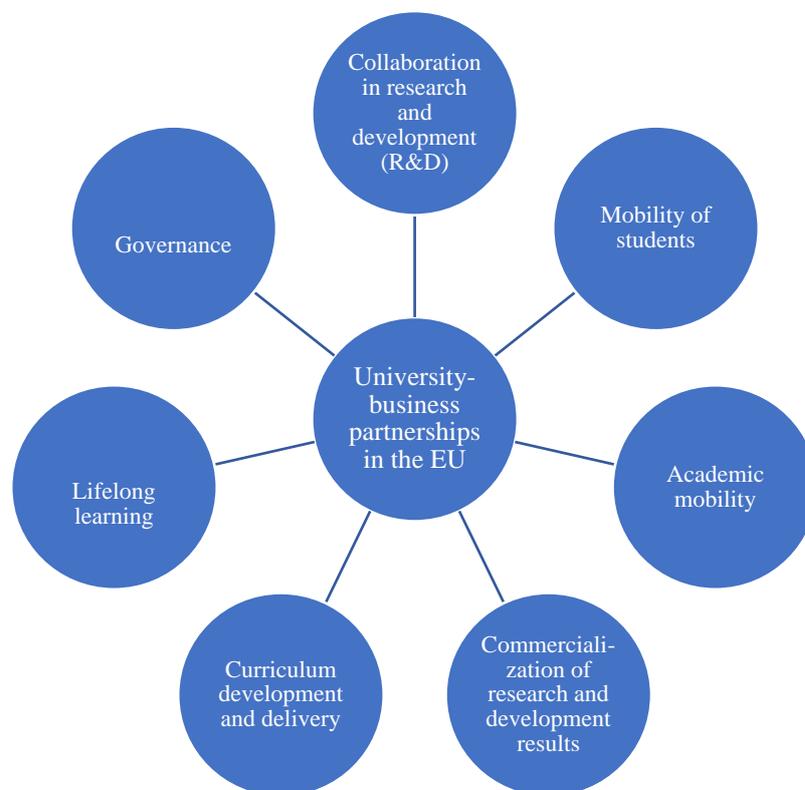


Figure 1. The main types of university-business partnerships in the EU countries [according to author’s compilation on the basis of the source: 5]

As we can observe from the Figure 1, collaboration in R&D, which can be described as one of the most developed types of partnerships between universities and business structures within the European Union, includes: first of all, discovering, developing or testing a new idea outcomes of which cannot be known or determined in advance on the basis of current knowledge, information or expertise; secondly, joint research and development activities, as well as contract research, R&D

consulting, cooperation in innovation; thirdly, joint publications with firm scientists or researchers; and, finally, joint supervision of theses with firm scientists, researchers in cooperation with business, and student projects in cooperation with business [6]. Meanwhile, Cunningham James A. [3] emphasizes that the increased attention to this matter is based on the fact that industrial investments in research and development are an important driver of economic growth and development, and business collaboration with universities is an important strategic vehicle to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of such investments. In addition, through research and development collaboration, “universities and public research institutes can not only share innovation skills with business structures, but also provide access to developed research and developed infrastructures needed for the design and testing of innovation products and processes [4]. On the basis of the above considerations it’s reasonable to assume that R&D collaborations of the higher education institutions and public research institutes with business organizations may take a wide variety of forms, including the following ones: joint laboratories, business-sponsored departments, long-term contracts and informal arrangements.

Speaking about mobility as the next type of university-business partnerships in the EU countries, some European experts [5] emphasize that student mobility is directly related to the temporary or permanent movement of students from higher education institutions to business structures. As a result, students are supposed to get strongly involved in such innovative activities, as start-ups and industry-based research projects, which are “distinguished by an opportunity to co-develop any research topic with an industry supervisor and a relevant academic supervisor, and to apply appropriate methodologies and analytical frameworks to interesting problems in real world contexts” [7].

Another type of mobility is called academic or staff mobility, which involves not only temporary, but also permanent movement of teaching staff or researchers from higher education institutions to business structures, as well as temporary or permanent movement of employees, managers of different levels of managerial

hierarchy and researchers from business structures to higher education institutions directly [5; 6]. The European Union's "ERASMUS program" of student exchange, established in 1987, today contributes to the temporary or permanent movement from higher education institution to another or from a certain university to the real business structure.

Commercialization involves bringing scientific research and development results to the market in cooperation with businesses through spin-offs, disclosures of inventions, patenting or licenses [5; 6; 8]. Many evidences are available to us to know that through a process, widely-known as commercialization, various research discoveries are brought to the goal market place, while new ideas are transformed into new products, services or technologies that are sold around the globe.

Curriculum development and delivery is the process of creating a learning environment and the development of human resources to modern society [5; 6]. According to our investigations of this type of university-business partnership in the EU countries, it can be realized due to the development of an existing programme of courses and modules, organization of the guest lectures by delegates from external business structures, and strengthening cooperation within various training programmes or through further professional education [6].

Following the scientific position of Mihaela C. Dan [9], we can assume that in the context of high competition on all markets people are forced to bring back in schools. Therefore the next type of university-business partnership, known as "lifelong learning programs", is aimed at ensuring "adult education, permanent education and/ or continuing education involving the acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours by higher education institutions to people working in external organizations" [6].

University-business partnership in governance is related to cooperation between higher education institution and business at the management level of the higher education institution or a certain firm [6]. This type of relationship provides

for involvement of scientists or researchers into the process of firm-decision-making or sitting on the boards of business organizations and also for involvement of the experienced business leaders into higher education institution decision-making processes or sitting on the boards of universities or at a faculty management level [6].

In general, all the existing types of partnership between university and business structures include a wide range of financial and material benefits. We strongly believe that the first of them is the most important one, but in practice other benefits should be also taken into account. At the same time, it is recommended for a university to militate for the open science, or dissemination of the results in the general public. The main advantages for a university in this type of partnership are as follows (See Table 1).

Table 1

**The main advantages of university-business partnerships for academic staff representatives and universities as a whole [according to author's compilation on the basis of the source: 9]**

List of advantages	Explanation
Pull of funds	For representatives of the academic staff means freedom in research, because they can choose freely topic of interests. The university has less pressure on the division of research funds
Practice focused research	New research fields open, professors have the possibility to test the results, the new methods and techniques.
Subjects content updated with the research results	Academic staff representatives have the possibility to develop new textbooks and practical experience of students.
Access to knowledge from a certain business structure	Academic staff representatives have the possibility to learn about the current market situation. As a result, there is a learning effect on both side of the partnership.

Table 1. illustrates that in the modern economic conditions universities can have a multifaceted mission, which consists of the social one (provision of services without monetary benefit), entrepreneurial (the higher education institution is interested in the turnover increase) and an innovative mission (through consulting contracts, solution development for the business structures).

Besides advantages, the cooperation with the business can be influenced also by threats. The bureaucratic structure of a university, lack of specialized staff in the marketing departments or technological transfer offices, high administrative costs, finance dependency are just some of the threats in such a partnership. Consequently, the external financier can impose special research topics, which can restrict the research freedom, or facilitate a brain drain, where professors and researchers move in the private sector because of attractive incentives [9, p. 71].

Coming to the conclusion, it should be mentioned that the modern socio-economic processes has intensified the need for strategic partnerships that go beyond the traditional sources of innovation. That is why many higher education institutions in EU countries are more actively involved in developing and marketing innovations. It is proved that any university-business partnership is able to bring recognized benefits but it has also many barriers. Due to these partnerships students of the universities can improve their learning experience and develop the necessary skills for further successful employment, while business organizations can improve their activity. In addition, the society can benefit from the increased employment, and a high competitive local industry, and the university can achieve its strategic goals while academic staff representatives can increase their reputation and expand their investigations. Obviously, the university-business partnership should be an important element in the process of higher education institution development. Framework conditions, separate situational factors, availability of funds greatly influence it, therefore Ukrainian universities have to include in their strategies and plans all the aspects that might drive these relationships.

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У збірнику вміщені статті учасників міжнародної науково-практичної конференції, метою якої було представити освітянський досвід у сфері викладання та дослідження європейських інтеграційних процесів в Україні та за її межами.

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