



# The Higher Education and Business Community Nexus: A Catalyst for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

**Dr Emily Beaumont**

University of  
Gloucestershire, UK

Former President of EEUK  
Vice President of ISBE



# Overview

- Context and Purpose
- Defining the Nexus
- UK Policy Landscape
- Case Studies
- Challenges and Enablers
- Policy and Practice  
Recommendations

# Why the Nexus Matters in the UK



Economic growth  
and innovation  
(Levelling Up  
Agenda)



Skills development  
and employability  
(Graduate  
Outcomes Survey,  
TEF)



Regional  
development  
(civic university  
role)



Knowledge  
exchange (KEF)

# Defining the Nexus



Collaborative  
partnerships



Enterprise  
ecosystems



Embedded  
entrepreneurshi  
p education



Policy-aligned  
mutual value  
creation (QAA,  
OfS, SBC)

# Benefits for UK HEIs

- Enhanced student outcomes (TEF, Graduate Outcomes Survey)
- Real-world learning experiences (Degree Apprenticeships)
- Research impact (REF and KEF alignment)
- Reputation and enterprise funding opportunities (SBC, Innovate UK)

# Benefits for UK Businesses

- Access to student and graduate talent
- Innovation and R&D through HE collaboration
- Degree apprenticeships for workforce development
- Business support via HE Growth Hubs

# Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Outcomes



Student start-ups and social ventures (e.g. UnLtd, Santander Universities)



Intrapreneurial skill development



SME support through HE programmes

Community and regional enterprise initiatives (e.g. Civic University Agreements)

# Case Study 1 – SETsquared Partnership



**Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff,  
Exeter, Southampton & Surrey**

UK's top university  
business incubator

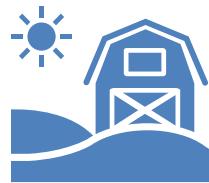
Collaboration across  
six leading HEIs

High-growth  
enterprise support  
and job creation

# Case Study 2 – Degree Apprenticeships



Employer-led  
programme design



Regional skills  
development (West  
Midlands, North East)



Addressing national  
productivity and skills  
gaps

# Challenges in the UK Context



Complex  
funding  
environment



Diverging  
national policies  
(England,  
Scotland, Wales,  
NI)



Short-term  
government  
priorities



Impact of Brexit  
on international  
partnerships

# Enablers of Success



SMALL BUSINESS  
CHARTER  
ACCREDITATION



ENTERPRISE  
EDUCATORS UK



KEF  
METRICS  
AND  
INCENTIVES



UNIVERSITY  
ENTERPRISE  
TEAMS AND  
GROWTH  
HUBS



CIVIC  
UNIVERSITY  
AGREEMENTS  
AND ANCHOR  
INSTITUTION  
ROLES

# The Role of Policy



KEF and  
Knowledge  
Exchange  
Concordat



SBC: Recognising  
enterprise  
excellence in  
HEIs



Lifelong learning  
and modular  
learning reforms  
(LLE)



QAA Enterprise  
and  
Entrepreneurship  
guidance (2018)

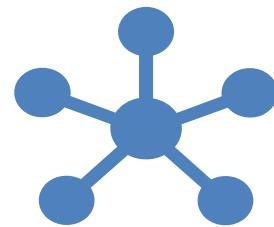
# Recommendations for UK Practice

- Embed enterprise across disciplines (QAA framework)
- Prioritise SME and start-up engagement
- Develop metrics aligned with KEF and TEF
- Champion civic impact and regional inclusivity

# Looking Ahead



HEIs as  
entrepreneurial civic  
institutions



Regional innovation  
clusters and place-  
based strategies



Post-Brexit global  
entrepreneurship  
engagement

# Final Reflections

- The UK HE-business nexus is a strategic national asset
- Long-term collaboration drives growth, innovation, and inclusion
- Let's lead enterprise for a fairer, more enterprising UK

# Questions and Discussion