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Cooperation between a University and Industry – Good Practices

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8.1 Introduction

The wealth of a country is built not by universities but by the business sector. Consequently, the academic sector also has a responsibility to support the development of the business sector. If Europe is to maintain its global competitiveness, it should to develop industries with high total factor productivity. In other words, it is necessary to develop the sectors in which innovative technology and science play an important role. Consequently, relationships between universities and the business are desirable.

The chapter consists of three parts. The first one describes European experiences that illustrate the importance of cooperation between universities and business. The second part presents results of a research project titled “Identifying Barriers in Promoting European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance” (IBAR), carried out in the years 2010–13 that examined, inter alia, relationships between universities and their stakeholders. The third part describes in detail the model of cooperation between the Warsaw School of Economics (WSE) and two consulting firms, Deloitte and DB Schenker, that was developed by the author.

8.2 The European approach to cooperation between universities and industry

The European Union published a communiqué by the Commission to the European Parliament, the EU Council, the European Economic
and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions titled “Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe’s higher education systems” (Brussels, 2011) that set out the framework for the development of the EU higher education sector in the present decade. In Section 2.4 of this communiqué, titled “Making the knowledge triangle work: Linking higher education, research and business for excellence and regional development” the European Union made a number of recommendations regarding university-business relations. Within universities efforts should be made to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation at and make greater use of interactive learning and knowledge transfer. Universities should also strengthen their infrastructure for transferring knowledge and for fostering start-ups that would commercialize university research. Partnering and cooperating with businesses should play a more central role in university organization, in part by extending incentives for personnel to undertake multidisciplinary research and in part by reducing regulatory barriers to university-business collaboration. Finally, local and regional development plans should include support for university-business cooperation and include universities in the creation of such plans.

Today, the third mission of a university is more and more often stressed. One of the definitions of this third mission is: “In modern knowledge societies, universities play an increasingly important role in achieving economic growth and social progress. Their traditional missions of teaching and research are being broadened to include Third Mission activities that facilitate their engagement with society and industry” (E3M, 2013). This third mission means that a university should establish relationships for the benefit of not only students, but also to a greater extent of society, including the business sector. Consequently, the university should take greater responsibility for its environment so that, for example, the universities should answer some of the needs of society such as providing graduates with needed skills to business, preparing democratic citizens, and so on. Activities included in the third mission include, inter alia, building relationships with internal and external stakeholders of the university. Consequently, a university fulfilling the third mission needs to cooperate with the business sector, for example by strengthening its offerings in lifelong learning, which is an increasingly more popular university operating concept, which is consistent with the communication of September 20, 2011 and the third university mission.