

Business Support and Development Unit (BSDU)

The Knowledge Transfer strategy of University of Bolton aims to position the university as a leading business-facing professional university in the North-West region, committed to employer-led continuing professional development, applied research and enterprise. The newly created **Business Support and Development Unit (BSDU)** represents the focus for the majority of the university's Enterprise support activities. Working together in partnership with other business support agencies in the region, e.g. Business Bolton, Bolton Business Ventures, Business Link etc. The university intends to become one of the towns leading providers of knowledge-based assistance to businesses, regardless of their status or stage of development; by bringing a **practical** and **business-like** approach to help overcome the challenges that face today's company managers, their enterprises and employees. Additionally, in partnership with business support centres in neighbouring further education colleges within Bolton and Bury, the BSDU will be at the hub of a University of Bolton Business Focus Consortium. This will holistically address the higher level skills and workforce development needs of these two large towns within northern Greater Manchester, thus supporting the local and sub-regional economic development strategies. The BSDU will provide a 'one stop shop' through which employers can gain advice and guidance and access a wide variety of products and services, some of which are briefly outlined below.

Through the resources provided by the **Design Studio, Innovation Factory, Product Development service and Creative Industry projects**, the university is able to provide a unique mix of expertise to industry via its Marketing, Finance and Training programmes, rapid-prototyping equipment and research capability. As a forward looking and professional university already making a significant contribution to the *Enterprise Agenda*, the University of Bolton will specialise in encouraging and supporting the business owner to focus on sales generation, product development and making profit.

University of Bolton, Resources, Services and Programmes for Business

1. Accredited CPD and short course provision

The university is unique within the region in offering a wide range of specific modules, tailored to support the personal and professional development needs of employees, each of which carries a CPD award as well as the learning credits. The university also offers a number of 'off the shelf' short courses designed to meet specific training needs; most of these are internally or externally accredited. Additionally we will design short courses around a particular company's requirements and offer a quality product at an affordable price. The university is at the forefront of accrediting in-house company training through the EBTA initiative (Employer-based Training Accreditation). Here we add value to employer designed training programmes by awarding specific credits and providing CPD awards at the appropriate academic level, in recognition of the successful learning achieved by employees.

Currently 7 NHS PCTS within the region are taking advantage of this initiative and we are also developing accredited awards linked to a training course delivered by a media company in association with the BBC.

2. Design Studio

Design Studio is partially funded by ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), this £6 million facility was opened in 2004. The Design Studio hosts over 90 PC's and Mac machines that run industry standard software to support over 15 different design disciplines, ranging from Graphic Design, to Electronic Design, to Product Design. The Design Studio through its many design disciplines has introduced the concept of "*Live Project Briefs*" to organisations where students who are undertaking both undergraduate and post graduate courses work on live projects for organisations.

Business	Students	Academics
Innovative project results from students	Project experience	Build links with industry
Ability to look on students as future employees (shop window)	Time management to schedule	Comprehension of skill requirements of our students
Knowledge partnership	Mix theory with practice	Mix theory with practice
Links with University, breadth and depth of knowledge (many academics covering all subject areas)	Real problems with Real outputs; Working to specification	Knowledge transfer
Use of University equipment and access to facilities	Project portfolio	Course content

2. Innovation Factory

The newly opened Innovation Factory is a 500 metre square extension and refurbishment to an existing building which was partially funded through ERDF. The new facility has more of a practical theme to it so that concept ideas can be taken from the drawing board and converted into working prototypes. It is home to the following workshops and laboratories which are fully equipped with standard machinery:-

- Woodwork
- Metalwork
- Textile Lab
- Ceramics
- Fine Art
- Innovation Zone
- Engine Lab
- Composite Lab
- Special Effects Studio / modelling

All of these facilities are fully supported by the University's highly skilled technicians who alongside the University's Academics can convert concept ideas into working prototypes for Alpha and Beta testing in preparation for certification or manufacture.

3. Product Development Service

The PDS is a complimentary service to both the Design Studio and Innovation Factory which can deliver the following services:-

- Development of concepts
- IP protection advice
- Production of manufacturing and assembly drawings
- Liaison with manufacturers
- Production of animations and presentations to aide the marketing of the product to potential investors and buyers

Currently it has a team of 2 researchers who work full time on industry related projects. As they are dedicated staff it means that the PDS is able to deliver projects to industry related time frames. The service has been set up in such a way that if the researchers do not have the required expertise to complete all facets of a project then they can call upon a pool of lead Academics from within the University's Schools who will have the required expertise and knowledge. Thus, allowing the service to be flexible enough to complete any project through the utilisation of an internal team and not involving third parties. Not only does the service have access to the right personnel to complete projects it also has access to specialist equipment such as an ABS rapid prototyping machine and a laser scanner for reverse engineering. This coupled with the Innovation Factory enables the University to convert concept into working prototype for testing. The University has also developed links with local manufacturers who can give advice on the most appropriate method for manufacture to reduce cost and ensure that it can be made.

The PDS has proved successful over the last 12 months with the service helping over 30 organisations ranging from the start-up lone inventor to the small to medium sized enterprise with over 50 employees and t/o in excess of £6m. This has lead to the generation of over £4m of increased sales and the creation of over 25 new jobs within the NW region.

4. Creative Industries

The University of Bolton has an extensive record of assisting the growth of the enterprise community in the North West. The University recognises that the Creative Industries are one of the fastest growth sectors in the UK, with the North West having the largest cluster of businesses outside of London and the South East. The University has fully integrated Creative Industries into its corporate strategy and has employed a full time creative industries project manager and a dedicated creative industries liaison officer. This team work together with the academics and students from the School of Arts, Media & Education & the School of Games, Computing & Creative Technologies to provide both research and professional development to the creative industries community across the North West. In addition we provide advice and guidance to creative businesses, access to resources and a gateway to engaging with some of the industries leading practitioners through guest lectures and events. We also provide direct support for some of the region's leading web and games developers this has often been tailored around games testing and technologies.

Research & Consultancy Service
Professional Development Opportunities
Access to events & industry guest lectures
Access to resources
Usability Testing Lab for Games & Web Developers
One to one employer engagement & signposting service
Opportunities for support through specific projects
Brokerage facility between industry and students (events, portfolio development, work placements, product developments)
Access to opportunities and projects offered by partner organisations
Access to creative industry news, events & vacancies through the Nerve Centre website: www.thenervecentre.org.uk. All members of this free service will also receive a monthly newsletter full of the latest opportunities for regions creative community.

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