

University Reform, Globalisation and Europeanisation (URGE)



Work Package 4 Detailed Plan

EU FP7 (PEOPLE) MARIE CURIE IRSES

Detailed Plan for Work Package 4

Work package number	4	Start date or starting event:	Feb 2011
Work package title	Policies: Universities as knowledge organisations		
Beneficiary/Partner Organisation short name	AU/UoA UNIVBRIS/UoA		
Work package coordinator	Prof. Susan Wright (AU)		

Description of work and Objectives (as originally in the application)

Many international agencies, not least the EU and the OECD, envisage a knowledge-based economy where the aim is to translate knowledge efficiently into innovation and production through regional and global networks of flexible organisations, with new styles of leadership and proactive, self-managing workers. In many countries, reforms have aimed to reposition universities within this economy. The Lisbon process, for example, has called for the establishment of a more autonomous form of university governance and more strategic leadership. In other settings this is to be achieved by circumscribing existing university autonomy through greater state direction in the form of funding mechanisms, governance reform, or legislative change. Many countries have tried to introduce such changes in order to strengthen ties between universities and local and globally organised industries, to stimulate greater economy and efficiency, and to create a more entrepreneurial environment for academics. Similar packages of reforms have been applied to universities with very different constitutions, relations to the state, and forms of internal decision making. The UK, New Zealand and Denmark exemplify the range of differences very well. The package is designed to connect the partners' existing research and the comparative literature on the reform of university governance and management to a broader research agenda on the local and global envisaging and enactment of knowledge organisations.

Objectives

- Share AU's knowledge on the conceptualisation of knowledge organisations and the role of universities in society and on how managers and workers are envisaged.
- Share AU's, UNIVBRIS's and UoA's knowledge on the reform of universities as knowledge organisations, with new roles in the surrounding society, and new forms of governance and management.
- Produce a detailed comparison between the three contexts which gets beneath similarities in the policy language to explore the ways universities, their leaders and workers, are conceptualised as knowledge organisations and changing in practice.
- Compare the above with similar research in the UK and Australia.
- Identify areas of future collaborative research between the partners.

Improvements to the description (arising from WP4 planning meetings)

There have been three improvements since the original proposal was written. First, the three teams' existing knowledge, and ideas for future projects, are much greater than originally envisaged for this work package. Second, knowledge exchanges to date in WPs 1-3 have facilitated a more informed framing of possibilities and objectives. Third, the first three bullet points in the above Objectives, can be better formulated in three sets of questions that have emerged from the planning meetings, and that we must be careful to keep integrating together:

1. How are universities being reconceptualised as 'knowledge organisations' (and what does that mean) in a knowledge economy? I.e. how are they being:
 - envisaged as having new roles in their region
 - networked into the new 'ecology' of industry, finance capital, government and knowledge producers, on a global scale
 - asked (e.g. EU 2008, Danish government 2003) not just to transfer knowledge to industry but to increase their 'interaction' with 'surrounding society' – with roles to be 'entrepreneurial', develop civil society and democracy, and be the 'critic and conscience' of society.
2. What changes to the university are being introduced in the name of equipping universities to fulfil these roles? I.e. how is this reflected in areas such as 'autonomy', reform of governance, strategic leadership, changes to financing, decision making, and disciplinary groupings and organisation?
3. How does this change the environment for, and expectations of, academics? They are, variously, conceived of as in need of strategic leadership, required to produce predetermined (ac)countable outputs, and expected to be self-managing, as well as self-motivated, pro-active and entrepreneurial. What do all these terms mean in policy imaginaries and in practice? How do academics, like other 'knowledge workers', make sense of this complex of ideas and expectations? What new opportunities, advantages and self understandings, as well as tensions, alienation or stress are they finding and experiencing? (This third strand will be developed further in terms of research practices in WP5 and in terms of academic careers, diversity and academic practice in WP6).

The existing and proposed work that contributes to this work package often focuses on one or two of the above, but the aim of the workshop should be to explore connections across all three, in keeping with URGE's overall objective to connect large-scale changes to 'political economy' with detailed and ethnographic changes 'on the ground'.

Tasks

We are committed to doing the following

Task 4.1: Share knowledge from AU's project on the ways knowledge organisations, their leadership and the nature of their workers are envisaged.

Task 4.2: Share knowledge from existing projects about the reform of universities, their changing roles in the society and economy, their autonomous governance and strategic management:

Task 4.3: Use insights from the above to review literature on the reform of universities as knowledge organisations elsewhere in Europe, notably in the UK, and in Australia.

Task 4.4: Generate detailed ethnographic comparisons, which get beneath similarities in the policy language, to explore how universities are conceptualised as knowledge organisations.

Visits

The visits listed below involve sharing knowledge from existing projects, and/or making comparative studies, and/or developing new projects out of URGE workshops and networks:

1. Bovbjerg (AU) will visit UoA (5 months) hosted by Shore and Rata. The purpose of this visit is to share knowledge arising from the project 'Stress, New Management and Intervention' in 4 kinds of 'knowledge organisations' in the public sector, and gain insights from comparative research on new forms of knowledge organisations in New Zealand. (Focusing also on Teamwork as part of a new research project on teamwork in different knowledge organisations)
2. Tremewan (UoA) will visit AU (1 month) hosted by Wright to share his knowledge of strategies to reposition universities in New Zealand and its regions.
3. Shore (UoA) will visit UNIVBRIS/AU (1 month). The purpose of this visit is to share knowledge arising from the project 'An Ethnography of Auckland University' and contribute to the WP4 workshop.
4. Robertson (UNIVBRIS) will visit AU to coincide with Shore's visit. She will share knowledge on the changed role of universities in the Bristol city/region, focusing on concepts of innovation and entrepreneurialism (ESRC funded project). The aims are to gain comparative insights from New Zealand and contribute to the WP4 workshop. (This visit is not covered by IRSES exchanges and funding will be sought elsewhere, e.g. Erasmus programme for staff mobility).
5. Lewis (UoA) will visit AU (1-2 months). The purpose is to work on a proposed project (with Shore) on 'The third mission of the university', focusing especially on the organisation of third stream activities in 7 countries, the tensions third stream activities generate for the social sciences, and concepts of academic entrepreneurship.
6. Optimally the visits of Lewis, Shore and Robertson will coincide by a visit to DPU by Vandzinskaite (Lithuania), to exchange ideas about universities' third mission and contribute to the formulation of her post doc project on 'Universities' interaction with surrounding society in a Nordic welfare state (Denmark) and a Baltic post-soviet state (Lithuania)'.

7. Michel-Schertges (AU) will visit UoA (2 months). The purpose is to conduct comparative research on academic identity formation, focusing on social arbitrariness, consciousness and alienation.
8. Trahar (UNIVBRIS) to visit AU (funded by Erasmus staff mobility) to share existing research on academics' experience of changing university environments (to be developed further for WP6, with a possible visit to UoA, and a focus on academics' reflexivity over teaching and quality)
9. Trahar (UNIVBRIS) will visit UoA (1 month).

Deliverables

D 4.1 Scientific working paper on ethnographies of university reform and universities as knowledge organizations.

D 4.2 Workshop to create synergies between existing knowledge and identify areas for future collaborative research at DPU, Copenhagen, on Wednesday 8 to Friday 10 August 2012.

Researchers involved

Involved in visits:

Bovbjerg (AU), Trahar (UNIVBRIS), Shore (UoA), Tremewan (UoA) Lewis (UoA), Michel-Schertges (AU)

Separately funded: Robertson (UNIVBRIS), Trahar (UNIVBRIS)

Involved as hosts:

Wright (AU), Kristensen (AU), Moutsios (AU), Nielsen (AU), Shore (UoA), Rata (UoA), Tremewan (UoA)