Featured School:

University of Cambridge
Cambridge Judge Business School
Cambridge, United Kingdom

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AACSB International
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The Cambridge Judge Business School is heavily involved in a variety of initiatives related to innovation, both within the business school itself and at the university level. The University of Cambridge is home to a large number of interdisciplinary research centers involving multiple academic units, including some centers that have become academic units in their own right. According to Alan Hughes, the Margaret Thatcher Professor of Enterprise Studies at Cambridge Judge Business School, innovation is viewed holistically at Cambridge, and so the collective aim of initiatives driven by the Centre for Business Research, the Centre for Process Excellence and Innovation, and the UK Innovation Research Centre, among others, is to cover the entire spectrum of the innovation process by studying each aspect in detail.

Professor Hughes says that all parties at Cambridge University with an interest in innovation, both within and outside the Judge School, hold regular consultation with one another. The point of this intra-university collaboration is to create an environment for research that is developed organically from the bottom up (versus imposed from the top down), but also supervised in such a way as to maximize the potential of the research for all of the university’s various stakeholders.

The Center for Business Research

Though physically housed within the Cambridge Judge Building, the Centre for Business Research (CBR) at Cambridge University is a multi-disciplinary research department of the University of Cambridge. Originally founded in 1994 as the Small Business Research Centre, the modern CBR is directed by Professor Hughes but independent of any academic unit. It draws upon the resources of the Faculties of Law, Economics and Politics, and Social and Political Sciences, as well as the Departments of Geography and Land Economy, the Manufacturing Engineering Group within the Centre of Engineering, and the Judge School itself.

Primary funding for the CBR came from the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), but other sponsors include the European Union, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, and the Cambridge-MIT Institute (a partnership begun in 2000 between the University of Cambridge and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology). The combination yields as much as £11 million in external funding, according to Professor Hughes, allowing for a far-reaching impact for the Centre’s research programs. Indeed, the CBR’s work has been sufficiently prolific as to make the Center itself the subject of a 2007 ESRC report about its impact on policy and practice.

The CBR conducts two primary research programs: Enterprise and Innovation, and Corporate Governance. The former program is concerned with the linkages between enterprise and innovation, and productivity and firm growth; the analysis of the innovative performance, financial and management characteristics, and location of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME); and the design and evaluation of policies towards the SME sector. The latter program is involved in numerous research projects on intra-
and inter-firm governance and regulation, both domestically (in the UK) and internationally. The CBR produces a number of special and annual reports, surveys on SME and other topics, working papers, and various other publications on its work.

The UK Innovation Research Centre

Another means by which the CBR impacts policy and practice is its involvement in a collaborative initiative for research and knowledge exchange with the Imperial College London’s business school, which is known as the UK–Innovation Research Centre (UK–IRC). The UK–IRC was established in 2008 in response to a UK government white paper that highlighted a need to “build on the UK’s current impressive performance on research and broaden the traditional knowledge exchange agenda to encompass new disciplines, new sectors, new businesses and those who work in the development and delivery of public services.”

The focus of the UK–IRC is to connect its research on how innovation can make businesses more competitive, improve public services delivery and help the UK meet social, environmental and economic challenges, to actual policy and practice in these regards, both domestically and internationally. Like the CBR, the UK–IRC also receives external funding from numerous high-level sources, in the amount of about £3 million, according to Professor Hughes, who also directs the UK–IRC. As with the CBR itself, this allows for a substantial amount of rigorous research activity in support of important current problems relevant to innovation. Past projects have included research into knowledge exchange between business and academia, SME finance and the ongoing global economic crisis, and the roles of universities in open innovation and commercializing science, among many others.

The Management of Technology and Innovation Program

In addition to its participation in multi-disciplinary centers like the CBR, Cambridge Judge Business School itself is home to research and teaching initiatives in support of innovation. For example, the school is the base for the delivery of the core components of the Management of Technology and Innovation (MoTI) program at Cambridge University. The MoTI program was established in 2003 with funding from the Cambridge-MIT Institute and, according to Professor Hughes, was modeled on that partnership as well. MoTI “provides scientists and engineers with skills and experience in the commercialization of technology.” Although it is not itself a degree program, MoTI is an element in several of the taught research master’s and doctoral degree programs offered by the University of Cambridge, most of which are non-business programs in applied science and engineering, nanotechnology, and life sciences. The programs also include one Cambridge Judge degree program, the MPhil in Technology Policy.
MoTI students attend an evening lecture series involving such topics as: Strategy for Innovative Firms; Organising for Innovation; Commercialising Science; Marketing; Microeconomics; and Decision Analysis. They also take part in in-company consultancy projects with MoTI partner organizations, which include public- and private-sector technology-based businesses and organizations. Some MoTI partners also take part in the lecture series. MoTI client consultancy projects are handled through the business school\textsuperscript{13}, and involve a six-week team project to address a current strategic problem identified by a partner organization.

**The Centre for Process Excellence and Innovation**

The Centre for Process Excellence and Innovation (CPEI) is an interdisciplinary research center that “brings together industry and academic partners to explore solutions on how to create sustainable competitive advantage through process and product innovation\textsuperscript{14}.” Although housed within the Judge School, engineering and science faculty are also involved in the Centre. The CPEI develops research at the intersection of technology, operations and process management, and innovation in collaboration with industry partners. It also houses and runs the content for several technology and innovation-related executive education courses\textsuperscript{15}, as well as elements of the MoTI program, based on the research outputs from the Centre and from Judge Business School faculty members. The faculty director of the MoTI program, Dr. Bill Nuttall, is also part of the management team of the CPEI\textsuperscript{16}.

Additionally, the CPEI offers fully-funded PhD studentships to develop its research agenda in the area of innovation management, among others. Indeed, there exist numerous opportunities for Judge School students at many levels to engage and be engaged by the innovation research done at Cambridge University, points out Professor Hughes. Not only do students at the master’s and doctoral level have the ability to engage in original research through their theses, but the research and other work done by the various centers and other units at Cambridge has a direct, symbiotic relationship with the taught curriculum.

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End Notes


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