

COMPETING PRIORITIES IN UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT



SCAN CARD · 13

DESCRIPTION

Partnerships between universities and private companies are expanding, particularly in applied research, innovation, skills development and regional economic initiatives. Universities are expected to contribute to competitiveness, entrepreneurship and workforce development through collaboration with industry. These partnerships provide access to funding, expertise and infrastructure, and strengthen universities' role in innovation ecosystems.

However, strong corporate involvement may shift engagement priorities away from community needs that are less profitable or visible. Tensions arise between commercial interests and public responsibilities, especially in regions with limited economic power.

RELEVANCE

Corporate partnerships create valuable opportunities for universities to strengthen innovation, knowledge exchange and regional development. They expand resources and connections that support engagement activities.

Yet the growing influence of corporate partners may shape engagement priorities in ways that don't always align with broader community needs. If not carefully balanced, commercial priorities may reduce attention to community needs that generate less visibility, funding or economic return.

NEED

Universities need transparent principles and governance mechanisms for managing corporate partnerships. Engagement strategies should ensure balance between economic collaboration and inclusive, community-oriented engagement.

This involves decisions about how to balance economic collaboration with social responsibility and community-oriented engagement. If not addressed, engagement portfolios may become skewed toward market actors, reducing inclusiveness and public value.

CATEGORY

Economic · Social · Ethical

SIGNAL STRENGTH

Medium



SCANNING METHOD

Policy review · Sector analysis

SOURCES

OECD (2019) University-Industry Collaboration · EUA (2022) Innovation Ecosystems · Goddard et al. (2016) The Civic University · EUA (2021) Universities without Walls · Farnell (2020) NESET