Knowledge and technology transfer (WTT)
Knowledge and technology transfer at the University of Konstanz: Institutional identity and vision

Preamble
The researchers at the University of Konstanz create valuable knowledge. Society profits from the results and insights produced by their research on such topics as diseases, languages, materials science, alternatives to animal experimentation, mechanisms of social integration as well as conflict and peace. Scientific research influences both private and public life. It lays the groundwork for developments and decision-making in the political, economic and private spheres of life. Innovation processes can help address current challenges and thereby support the continuous and constructive development of our society.
The University of Konstanz acknowledges its responsibility in these processes by striving to continuously advance its knowledge and technology transfer activities as well as to enhance our culture of innovation. New impulses, discourses and information etc. are generated by innovation processes and are used by our university to strengthen its core responsibilities in research and teaching.

Institutional identity
Since its founding in 1966 on the basis of future-oriented reform ideas, the University of Konstanz has continuously developed its model as a medium-sized, but research-oriented, innovative, flexible, and responsive institution of higher education for the specific purpose of creating and sharing new knowledge. This unique identity, our “Modell Konstanz”, distinguishes itself through its flat hierarchies (which extend to the university administration) and its inherent interdisciplinarity in both research and teaching. These qualities provide the pre-requisites for successful knowledge and technology transfer. The geographic location of the university near several other highly developed and scientifically advanced countries enhances its international orientation as well as its regional and international relationships. Transfer activities are carried out in all university departments. The University of Konstanz defines its knowledge and technology transfer as an interconnected and reciprocal process between science, industry and business, politics and society. For this reason, the university advances a comprehensive understanding of transfer. Knowledge and technology transfer are a crucial component of its overall strategy. Following the example of the position paper from the German Council of Science and Humanities (2016), the University of Konstanz categorises knowledge and technology transfer into three spheres of activity: communication, advice and application.
The University of Konstanz understands “communication” - or science communication - to be a regular exchange and interaction between actors from society, industry and business, politics, culture and other stakeholders. This communication generates a scientifically reasoned discourse that not only helps to provide solutions to societal problems, but it also keeps the flow of information transparent and responsible, improves education levels and stimulates the understanding of and enthusiasm for science. Here, the university utilises a variety of available science communication formats, which include, amongst others, media activities, online dialogue (especially in social networks), public forums, exhibits, publications and public school events.
As a public institution that systematically develops and evaluates highly specialised knowledge and expertise, the University of Konstanz is also committed to providing “advice”. Universities enjoy a great deal of trust due to society’s high expectations regarding their independence and objectivity as well as their ability to create and share scientific knowledge. The university is committed to effectively utilising its unique status to drive innovation forward and advance the public interest. For this reason, it carries out many transfer activities in the area of “advice” such as scientific policy consulting, assessments, scientific evaluations as well as participation in external councils and committees.
In the past, “application” in the form of commercial applicability of new technologies was the primary goal of knowledge and technology transfer at universities. For the University of Konstanz, converting knowledge into practical applicability means much more than developing technological products or licensing patents. It carries out many activities in regard to application. Examples include promoting joint research projects, creating spin-offs, providing service learning and continuing education opportunities as well as supporting contract research.

*Communication, advice and application* are not isolated areas of activity at the University of Konstanz. Instead, all three are to be continuously integrated in order to maximise their synergies. That what connects the university’s diverse outreach activities is its commitment to an a sustainable creation of value. The university considers the extension of the purely scientific value chain into the surrounding region and society to be important - not solely from a sense of responsibility or to legitimise its actions, but also and especially because it benefits from the interactions and exchange with society. As a result of these transfer activities, new topics and questions can be generated in different research areas, new and innovative solutions can be discovered, or in the least, different perspectives can be shared and balanced. As a university that is open and accessible to the public, it utilises various measures to support the diverse activities of its members in regard to the transfer of knowledge and technology. In addition to providing advisory and other services, the university has accepted the challenge to further develop and interlink existing structures as well as establish incentive systems for our researchers. The internal coordination of and support for knowledge and technology transfer activities are to be strengthened.

**Principles of knowledge and technology transfer**

As illustrated above, the University of Konstanz utilises knowledge and technology transfer to fulfil its responsibility as part of a global mission to advance an international innovation process by interacting with collaborative actors in society, industry and business, politics and culture. It acts in accordance with the following principles:

- As a state institution, the University of Konstanz takes its obligation to act in the public interest seriously.
- The University of Konstanz supports and promotes transparency in the area of knowledge and technology transfer.
- The University of Konstanz strives to establish and maintain long-term relationships with its collaboration partners. These relationships, in turn, help develop mutual trust, which is fundamental to the exchange of knowledge and expertise within the innovation process.
- High ethical and quality standards, as well as strict Guidelines to Ensure Good Scientific Practice, are also expected and practised in the transfer of knowledge and technology.

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1) Wissenschaftsrat (German Council of Science and Humanities): Wissens- und Technologietransfer als Gegenstand institutioneller Strategien (Drs. 5665 – 16) 2016, p. 21