Case study

Udo Kruschwitz and Simon Lucas (The University of Essex) / Active Web Solutions Ltd.

This KTP project involves the School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering and Active Web Solutions, an Ipswich based company devoted to developing enterprise information systems.

The aim of the project is to develop an intelligent mail server to support collaborative management and cross-enterprise projects. It involves a focus on both research and development, applying natural language engineering and sophisticated search technology to this rich and complex domain.

Udo Kruschwitz stated:

“The success of a project depends crucially on the Associate. We have found the perfect match for the post.

The enthusiasm brought in by AWS, our industrial partner in this project, is one of the major factors that makes working on the project so interesting and enjoyable.”

Rob Blackwell, R&D Director at Active Web Solutions is delighted with the results:

“We established an excellent relationship with the University of Essex from the beginning

- The research and academic guidance is really helping to drive innovation
- Our customers have seen the prototypes and are excited with the results
- We hope to have a market leading product offering later this year

“The KTP is more than just a project, it’s developed into a much wider relationship. We now offer summer placements to students and we help with guest lectures. It’s been really refreshing to work with the team at Essex who have contributed valuable expertise and are helping us to stay at the leading edge of software design and development.”

“IT is great to see cutting-edge natural language engineering techniques implemented in real applications”

How do I apply?

In the first instance please contact:

The Knowledge Transfer Manager
Research and Enterprise Office
University of Essex
Colchester
Essex
CO4 3SQ

E: ktp@essex.ac.uk
T: +44 (0) 1206 872922

www.essex.ac.uk/reo

Simon Lucas, Dyaa Albakour and Jan Stringer review project milestones

What is a Knowledge Transfer Partnership?

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) is a partnership between your company, a university and a talented graduate. KTPs enable you to access new skills and expertise to help your company develop.

The partnership involves a recently qualified graduate (Associate) working full-time within your company on a project central to your needs. The Associate is jointly supervised by your company and a senior academic of the university. The cost of a KTP is subsidised by the UK government, making it an efficient way to access research skills and knowledge that may not exist in your business.

The KTP scheme is an important service provided by the University of Essex to businesses. It presents an excellent opportunity for companies and organisations to enhance their productivity, capacity to innovate and reputation through the top rated research of the University of Essex.

How does a Knowledge Transfer Partnership help your business?

KTPs can help businesses to:
- Find innovative solutions for business challenges
- Enhance their competitive advantage
- Expand market opportunities
- Generate a significant increase in profit
- Improve business performance
- Use graduates to accelerate innovation
- Get advice and support from experts

Besides the obvious financial advantages of KTPs, there are significant benefits to be gained from closer links with the University of Essex. These include:
- Excellent facilities for meetings, seminars, conferences and events
- Information and Library services including the UK Data Archive
- A wide range of training opportunities including business administration and recruitment opportunities, as your company develops partnerships
- Stronger links with the business community
- A KTP project is flexible and can be adapted to changes in your business strategy or the marketplace. This will ensure that the end result provides the solution you need for success.

Is a KTP right for your business?

Businesses of all sizes and from all sectors, including social enterprises, can take part in the KTP scheme. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are particularly encouraged to participate in the KTP scheme provided the business is financially sound.

If a KTP is not suitable there are many other ways that the University of Essex can help you, including consultancy and skills training.

Visit: www.essex.ac.uk/ktp for more details.

Who else benefits from a KTP?

A Knowledge Transfer Partnership benefits all of the participants:
- Your business has access to expert advice and support from the University of Essex
- The graduate (KTP Associate) applies research knowledge and skills in a real business environment
- The University of Essex develops fresh insights and ideas for teaching and research and creates a stronger link with the business community

How is a KTP funded?

A KTP is part-funded by a Government grant. A small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) is only expected to contribute a third of the costs involved in a project. The average annual KTP contribution for a SME is significantly less than the cost of a new full-time member of staff. A KTP delivers far more than one individual’s time and skills, with minimal administration and human resource overheads.

Your contribution to the costs not only gives you the services of your KTP Associate but also the time and expertise of the academics or researchers working with them. Your business also has access to other resources and facilities of the University.

Projects we can help you with

By virtue of the wide range of subjects studied at the University of Essex (including law and management, social sciences, arts and humanities, science and engineering), the type of project that we can help you with is almost unlimited.

Recent projects include:
- Optimising decision-making processes
- ‘Intelligent’ e-mail systems
- Renewable energy
- Location tracking of stock

These are examples of computer science and electronic engineering projects. KTPs seek equally well in projects relating to biological sciences; psychology; health and human sciences; law; management; social sciences; philosophy; history; art history; literature, film, and theatre studies. We would be pleased to discuss suitable opportunities with you in commercial confidence.

How does a KTP work?

Together with our specialist Knowledge Transfer Manager, you will identify an issue and the academic team with the right blend of specialist expertise to solve it. You will be able to draw on our experience and knowledge and apply it to your own organisational needs to enhance the performance of your business.

Once your business and the KTP Manager have drawn up a project proposal, the University will make a grant application to the KTP Central Office. When this is approved, you and the University will jointly recruit a recent graduate or postgraduate (KTP Associate) who is suitably qualified to carry out the project work. The KTP Associate is employed by the University but works in your business to manage the project, apply their expertise and transfer the specialist knowledge of the University of Essex to your business.

The University-based academic team will include a supervisor with the right blend of knowledge and additional academic experts as required. They will work closely with you, your senior managers and the KTP Associate. The academic supervisor will typically spend half a day per week working with you and the Associate, to ensure the project stays on track and is successful.