

Transforming UK translation

Our commitments to developing the system over the next 10 years

We believe that research should have the widest possible benefit to society, and that new knowledge and discoveries should be applied beyond the academic setting wherever possible. A vibrant translation system is essential for this to occur.

This document sets out our ambition for translation and the commitments that our organisations collectively make to achieve this and to break down barriers across the system. While we all have different roles to play, and not every organisation will have the resource or remit to address all of the actions outlined, we will work together to implement practical actions and take a creative, collaborative and bold approach to deliver continuous improvement and lasting change. This will allow us to build and grow a thriving knowledge economy founded on the UK's historic strength in research.

We have used a broad definition of translation, covering a range of outputs and activities primarily taking place in universities and research institutes. This includes the exchange of knowledge and ideas; the creation and exploitation of intellectual property (IP); academic-industrial collaborations; the establishment of spin-out companies; and the development of products, processes and enabling technologies such as research tools and materials.

A culture that allows research and translation to thrive together

Commitment 1: We will foster a system that rewards and celebrates translation as part of research excellence. Translation should be an accepted part of the academic endeavour and should be recognised in recruitment, funding and promotion decisions — publication records are not the only way to assess academic achievement.

Commitment 2: We will encourage and assist the movement of people and ideas between academia and industry. Working across sectors should be the norm and not the exception.

Commitment 3: We will open up training and development opportunities so that all researchers, including those in their early career, can develop their awareness of, and skills in, translation.

Support and investment that nurtures and develops innovative ideas

Commitment 4: We will work together to ensure that the principal focus of translation is delivering benefits for society, recognising that this includes wealth creation. Those involved in translation, including academics and knowledge exchange professionals, should not simply focus on recovering costs or generating short-term revenue for a university or institute.

Commitment 5: We will support translation activities, including those delivered through a Technology Transfer Office, so there is sufficient resource to work at pace and fully realise the potential of research outputs. This could include developing appropriate IP strategies; incubating ideas; creating bespoke networks of expertise around projects; and finding the best route to market.

Commitment 6: We will assist in the development of clear and accessible IP policies and practices. These should be harmonised wherever possible so that IP can be utilised quickly and easily to deliver impact.

Commitment 7: We will help to build wide-ranging and trusted networks of people with commercial and entrepreneurial expertise so that researchers and those who support the translation process can access the advice and guidance they need to develop ideas successfully.

Commitment 8: We will support and invest across the translation system. This ranges from small amounts of concept funding which can be accessed with minimal bureaucracy, to patient capital that backs propositions over the long-term and has realistic expectations about returns.