About the toolkit

The South East Network for Social Science (SeNSS) Doctoral Training Partnership promotes collaborations between social science researchers and private business and industry.

Following a mapping exercise, the SeNSS partnership has identified key types of collaborations and developed checklists to support doctoral students, supervisors and businesses looking to create successful research collaborations. The toolkit is designed to enhance the capability for private sector engagement, increase the understanding of business benefits of collaboration, and to enable the SeNSS partnership to respond to the UK government's industrial strategy and relevant funding opportunities.

Research found there is a positive view of engaging with private industry, although challenges remain around alignment of research goals, timescales of doctoral research projects and the translation of research into meaningful outputs for business. This toolkit will help the different stakeholders think through how best to overcome these challenges, ensuring successful collaborations.

There are clear advantages for all stakeholders when they undertake collaborative doctoral research including the expansion of networks, the solving of real world problems, gaining industry experience, impact and enhancing career opportunities.

The SeNSS network is well placed to engage successfully and support business growth in a range of sectors including Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Health and Wellbeing and Human Resources.

SeNSS AND LOCAL GROWTH

Social Science research makes a crucial contribution to the UK economy, worth £24.3bn according to researchers at LSE (social science teaching and research alone is valued at £4.8b p.a.)
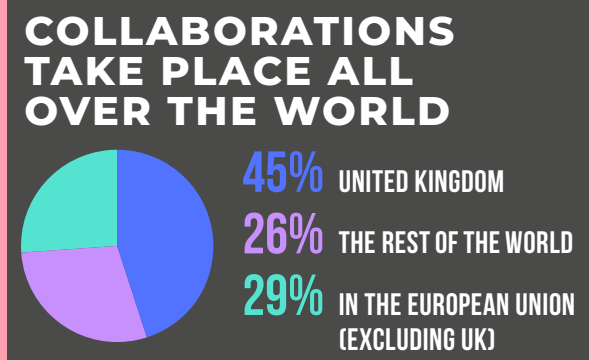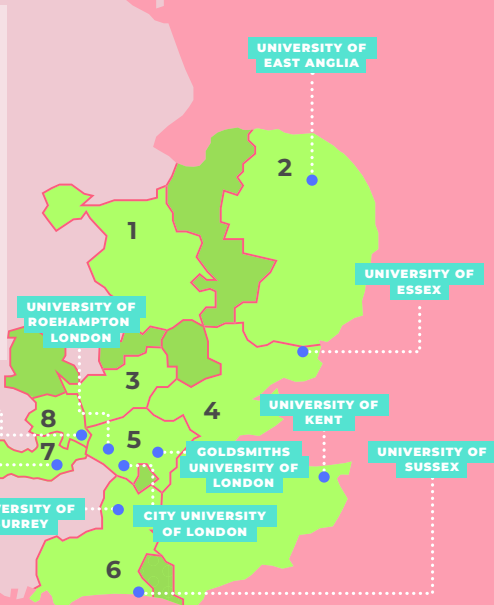
Social science insight is increasingly recognised for its contribution to UK prosperity, security, and wellbeing

In the coming years, economic growth (in skills, industries and infrastructure) will be driven by national and local Industrial Strategies

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- ● Overlaps
- **1** Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
- **2** New Anglia
- **3** Hertfordshire
- **4** South East
- **5** London
- **6** Coast to Capital
- **7** Thames Valley Berkshire
- **8** Buckinghamshire Thames Valley

The SeNSS DTP maps onto 8 overlapping LEP areas.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON LONDON

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

UNIVERSITY OF KENT

UNIVERSITY OF READING

GOLDSMITHS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

CITY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

COLLABORATIONS TAKE PLACE ALL OVER THE WORLD

- **45%** UNITED KINGDOM
- **26%** THE REST OF THE WORLD
- **29%** IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EXCLUDING UK)

SOCIAL SCIENCE COLLABORATIONS ALREADY TAKE PLACE IN THE FOLLOWING SECTORS ACROSS THE NETWORK

- (£) Financial Services
- Management Consulting Services
- Accounting and Auditing Services
- Banking and Consumer Lending
- (+) Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals
- Energy and Utilities
- Food and Beverage Production
- Healthcare Services
- Manufacturing

4 THINGS WHICH MAKE A SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

Relevance
BEING CLEAR ON HOW THE RESEARCH IS OF INTEREST AND BENEFIT TO A BUSINESSES

Communication
REGULAR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PHD STUDENT, SUPERVISOR AND BUSINESS

Trust
TAKING TIME TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

Language
ADAPTING LANGUAGE FROM 'ACADEMIC' TO 'BUSINESS' TO ARRIVE AT A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Selecting the right supervisor is key to success

Supervisor contacts is the most common way in which PhD students identify business collaborators. This is closely followed by student's own contacts. PhD students who were consulted for our research unanimously stated that selecting the right supervisor was key to a successful collaboration.

PhD Collaborators come in all shapes and sizes...

THE ENTHUSIAST
A business research question is the primary focus of the PhD

THE TRAILBLAZER
Works with an industry body to understand trends in a sector

THE INVESTIGATOR
Uses business data to test an idea

THE DISSEMINATOR
Keeps an eye on how their academic research can be applied

THE TROUBLE SHOOTER
Can use their expertise to answer business questions on a short-term consultancy basis

MISALIGNMENT OF PRIORITIES AND MUTUAL MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN SECTORS ARE THE MAIN BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION
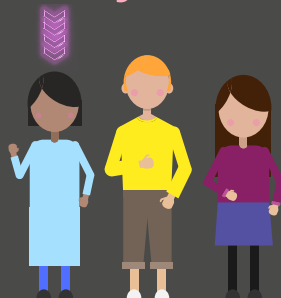
47% of academics feel that misalignment of priorities or interest is the main barrier to successful PhD and business collaboration

46% of academics cite a lack of understanding between academia and business/industry as hampering collaboration

35% of academics feel a lack of funding support can limit the opportunities to work with business and industry

Supervisors are keen to know more about how to supervise a PhD business collaboration

80% of academics in the SeNSS network are interested in supervising doctoral students with a business focus

62% of academics report that they feel somewhat confident in supporting doctoral students with business collaboration but recognise some gaps in knowledge or confidence

> "I have only started to do this [business collaborating] myself, but over time imagine I'll become more experienced/comfortable"
> Academic

> "I am lacking industry experience myself"
> Academic