

UKSPA Members' Meeting, Sunderland, 18 May 2007 - Feedback from Focus Group

Focus Group Theme: Incubation at Science Parks

Attendees: Julie Watson (CELS at Newcastle)
Lindsey Jones (QSTP)
Nina Sarlaka (Tamar Science Park)
Margaret Pullar and Rob Singh (Newlands Science Park)
Mike Day (Technium Digital)
Martin Bucknall (Wolverhampton Science Park)
Clive Duggleby (Tetricus Ltd)
Simon Parsons (West of Scotland Science Park)

1. Overview

The group agreed that it would be a useful forum to share experience and information. Relevant group topics were identified as detailed below.

2. Identification of Topics

2.1 What the Incubator Manager Wants

(I've tried to group them into topic areas, though we may want to change them around a bit)

Group – can you please indicate priority of each topic in the right hand column (from 1 – 34)

Topic Area	Topic	Priority
Strategic Issues and Set up / development	Funding for incubators	
	How early other Science Parks managed to involve the private sector in the provision of incubators	
	Property vs business / economic development	
	Output definitions for RDAs – value for money	
	How incubation fits into state aid	
	A simple measurement system for the success of the incubator	
Incubation Process	Systems and monitoring tools to measure tenant interventions	
	Agreed definitions of incubation, pre-incubation, grow on etc.	
	Types of incubation models used by UKSPA members	
	Standard documents related to incubation for sharing	
	Access to business incubation bids and plans – models / templates	
	Selection process / incubation criteria	

Tenant Services	What services should be provided at each stage of the incubation process	
	Ideas on how to help businesses	
	Access to specialist business mentors	
	What services clients really value over and above the property	
	Locating funds that helps clients set up in business	
	Funding available for incubator clients	
	Top 5 or 10 most used services in incubators	
	How do tenants pay for services	
	Which services should be inclusive and which should carry an additional charge	
	How should services be promoted to clients	
	Do crèches work	
Operational Issues	Advice on generating a pipeline	
	CRM and client tracking systems	
	Successful exit policies	
	Rental models	
	Advice on whether shared specialist physical facilities really work	
	Advice on whether hot desks / hot offices really work	
	Optimal space usage	
	Strategies for dealing with difficult clients	
	Virtual incubation and how to operate it	
Shared Info	UKSPA-wide client database by sector / sub-sector	
	Case studies of successful incubation	

2.2 What the Clients Want

The group identified the following client wants from their own incubator experience

- Everything for free
- Access to academic research facilities

- Valuable networking
- A single point of contact
- Student support on an as required basis
- Good Facilities Management services
- Social facilities
- Financial and marketing support – hands on specific services at the right time
- Tailored and timely services
- Simple and reliable IT services
- Bar / lifestyle facilities
- Incubator to be in the right location
- People with senior management level experience
- Cheap rents
- Other tenants to be in the incubator for the right reasons
- Good public transport connections
- Funding right through the process
- Support with paperwork for grants etc.
- Support on legal issues / HSE etc.
- Mentoring
- Good value for money
- A route to high-tech business incubation support
- Car parking
- Access to high tech shared equipment

2.3 Potential Benefits from Group

- Baseline information on incubators
- Sharing information with other practitioners
- A matrix of incubators and their services
- Case studies of similar companies / incubators
- Best practice

- Library of documentation – processes, systems, models
- Problem sharing and solving
- Sharing of honest experiences in an informal setting

3. Next Steps

The group intends to meet at the next UKSPA meeting in Keele in September 2007. From the information collated in 2.1 above, the 3 most pressing issues for group members will be identified and will form the agenda.

Members agreed to do some preparation in advance of the next meeting by circulating to other group members any specific issues / questions they have in relation to the 3 topics selected.

Each topic will be brain stormed at the meeting and any noted issues / questions addressed.

The agenda for the following meeting will also be agreed.