



## **SUPA Industry Focus Group discussion paper**

Prepared by M. Wasley 21/4/16

### **Overview**

This document has been prepared as a discussion paper for the third SUPA Industry Focus Group meeting on 25th April 2016. It is based on the first two meetings of the Group on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 and 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The members of the Group to date are listed below.

Alan Miller (Chair), Amin Abdolvand, Tom Brown (first meeting), Duncan Robertson (second meeting), Daniel Esser, Des Gibson, Francesco Ginelli, Andy Harvey, Keith Mathieson, Iain Ross (invited to join following the first meeting), Arthur Trew, Christian Killow, Mat Wasley.

These members were not all available for both meetings so the following representatives also attended: Cait MacPhee, Duncan Robertson, Stuart Reid, Val O'Shea, Emma Elliot, Linda Sommerlade

### **Motivation**

This Group is one of three recently set up by SUPA, the other two being an Education and Outreach Focus Group and a Research Foresighting Focus Group. The purpose of this Group is to investigate how SUPA can most effectively support knowledge engagement and impact across the eight universities.

### **Items discussed to date**

The group began by discussing SUPA's past approach to KT. There was no specific KT activity built into the first phase of SUPA, but SUPA II saw the formation of a KT team. It was envisaged that the team would include a Director, a business development manager, and two "SUPA Technicians" – post doctoral level researchers who would be able to undertake projects for industry. ERDF (European Structural) funding was then sought to recruit an additional business development manager, and the team also benefitted from an STFC IPS Fellow. For various reasons the KT team has since reduced in size from the original headcount of five to a single KE Coordinator.

The ERDF funding brought with it KPIs on engagement with SMEs. These were successfully met, but there was concern that some of this activity was duplicating work already being done by business development staff in SUPA's universities. More recently, SUPA has broadened its outlook on KT, the focus being on adding value to the activities already taking place in SUPA's universities. The KE Coordinator title reflects a broader outlook to KT, including the creation of impact from research, which can include policy and public engagement in addition to commercialisation

The Group considered SUPA's main KE engagements. These are:

- Industry Placements in various forms
- Support for engagement with industry, e.g. through Innovate UK calls
- Innovation and Enterprise coaching for staff and researchers (last course was 2013)
- Graduate school careers events with multiple industry speakers
- The SUPA "Expert Tank" recruitment site
- PEER support for engagement in Horizon2020 and other EU R&D initiatives
- Enabling cross SUPA opportunities (the International Year of Light being an example where SUPA was able to successfully apply for SFC funding on behalf of the universities)



## Next steps

The group has considered a number of possible routes forward, this has included the following:

- Refresh SUPA's industry-facing material, including both online and printed materials. Specifically:
  - Update the KT sections of the SUPA web site
  - Produce case studies of engagement with industry and commercialisation of physics research
- Use the updated SUPA video classroom and related web facility to:
  - put CPD courses and other industry focussed material online
  - create an online course in Entrepreneurship (initial discussions with Tom Baer from Stanford University have taken place on this)
- Graduate School training in KE, which could include an Enterprise Summer School (perhaps in conjunction with other organisations such as Enterprise Campus and Converge Challenge)
- Hold industry-facing events. These could take the form of:
  - A single company visits and presents challenges to SUPA researchers
  - SUPA outlining how physics can benefit business to multiple SMEs (working with Interface)
  - An event with multiple companies in a particular sector, perhaps along the lines of the recent IOP Physics in Food summit.
- An exhibition on physics impact at the SUPA Annual Gathering
- Considering how best to move forward with the SUPA recruitment site, which could include teaming up with a recruitment provider, generating revenue from it, or closing it down
- Working closely with other organisations, including Innovation Centres, UKATC, Fraunhofer CAP, IOP for KE initiatives and events

## To consider

The Group is invited to consider

- The continuation of this Focus Group?
- (If the Group continues) is this the correct membership? Should there be membership external to SUPA?
- What are the key organisations that this Group needs to work with?
- Priorities given limited resources?