College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine: Strategy for Commercialisation and Knowledge Transfer

The College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) Research Committee (comprising Head of College, Heads of Institutes and Centres, commercialisation lead, CMVM’s Directors of Research and Postgraduate Studies) is responsible for research strategy and seeding initiatives. Resources are targeted at Institutes and their constituent Centres. Research Committee supports new investigators and initiatives with ‘bonding capital’ and seed-corn funds, drives integrative and infrastructural bids and ensures translation and novel training initiatives. Exemplar cross-cutting projects funded include:-

- Entrepreneur-in-residence and business development support posts
- Clinical trials unit set-up and coordinator
- Generation Scotland research manager
- Data warehousing facilities and management

The College’s commercialisation strategy has been to concentrate on patenting and licensing, which increased 3-fold (57 new filings/grants in UoA4 alone) and 9-fold, respectively (2001-7), underlining success. Whilst contract/commercially-initiated research is not our priority, staff undertook collaborations of mutual interest with industry (£17.5M) and were in high demand for advice (304 consultancies, £3.3M) 2001-7.

Translation and commercialisation have been transformed by a reorganisation of the University’s technology transfer service (Edinburgh Research and Innovation). We won an MRC Translator Award to fund an external consultant (Dr Howard Marriage) as an ‘Entrepreneur in Residence’, with strategic use of SFC-derived Knowledge Transfer monies to employ a supporting team (n=6) remitted to seek and exploit translational opportunities for commercial and non-commercial benefit. In another new model, CMVM and NHS Lothian are partners in the Translational Medicine Research Collaboration, a £50M initiative in Scotland funded by Wyeth and Scottish Enterprise.

A novel intramural, academic-based commercial strategy is the Centre for Translational and Chemical Biology (CTCB), an initiative between CMVM and Science and Engineering. CTCB studies "molecular recognition and signalling processes in biology and the effects of chemical intervention in biological systems.

Translation is being further facilitated by the development of the new Edinburgh BioQuarter (5.5 hectares) on the NRIE/QMRI campus, initiated by CMVM in association with Scottish Enterprise, NHS Lothian and Alexandria Real Estate Equities (California). BioQuarter has funds for the new MRC-CRM building, a multi-occupancy incubator building (completion 2011) and plans to accommodate commercial, NHS and University expansion.