

## Careers in Technology Transfer

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**Patricia Latter, RTTP**

Head of Knowledge Transfer and Impact, Royal Veterinary College

Patricia has been working in knowledge exchange and commercialisation (KEC) for over 25 years.

**“I am fascinated by the research... technology transfer is fun.”**

### How did you get into KEC?

I spent seven years at Imperial Cancer Research Fund, initially in Research Administration, seconded to support different research groups, and then a while with the Public Relations team. After starting as Licensing Manager with the first Imperial Cancer Research Technology team, I spent a year at BTG before joining RPMS Technology (the Royal Postgraduate Medical School's technology transfer subsidiary).

### How has your career progressed from that point to where you are today?

RPMS Technology was incorporated into Imperial College Innovations during the 'medical mergers' in 1998. I became head of the Medical Sciences team, up to 2002. Imperial became very focused on spin-out company creation during this time and the opportunity to develop the technology transfer activity from scratch at the Royal Veterinary College was very attractive. The RVC role has changed a lot over time, according to the funding available, but has remained a fascinating and positive environment.

### What training have you had which has been particularly useful?

When I started out, KEC was a new profession in the UK, so there were few expectations of particular skills or expertise. There were no dedicated training opportunities and I learned a very great deal from my boss – Dr Jonathan Gee (now of Spark Ventures) – who remains a good friend and valuable mentor.

I was involved with PraxisUnico from the beginning, and delivered the Marketing section of the first Fundamentals of Technology Transfer course. I have been able to sit in, as delegate or trainer, for most of the courses, which has been hugely valuable.

### What does your day-to-day role involve?

My role now is quite inward-facing, to support the academic staff. It is focused as much on impact as commercialisation and industry relationships.

### Which achievements would you describe as career highlights?

My genuine highlights have been seeing members of KEC teams I have managed progress to senior roles and success. There is, of course, self-interest in this too – as they become useful network contacts.

### What do you enjoy most about your role?

I am fascinated by the research and some veterinary work has been quite an eye-opener. I always say TT is fun because the scientists do all the hard stuff and when it works, we get to play with it. The academic staff at RVC are tremendous (which may be why I have been here so long), and working on the impact material for REF 2014 was surprisingly enjoyable.

### What advice would you give anyone looking to start out in TT/KE today?

Network rabidly. Build relationships with everyone and especially industry contacts. Listen to identify what people want, think about what may provide solutions, and work out how you can contribute to that – whether it relates to your own portfolio or not. Some things are a bit different from when I started out, but to me, a lot remain the same: it is a people business, backed by some legal formalities. If you become useful, you become trusted and then you can get a lot done.

There are various versions of this quote, but I think it is a useful one for KEC professionals: “There is no limit to what can be accomplished if it doesn't matter who gets the credit.”