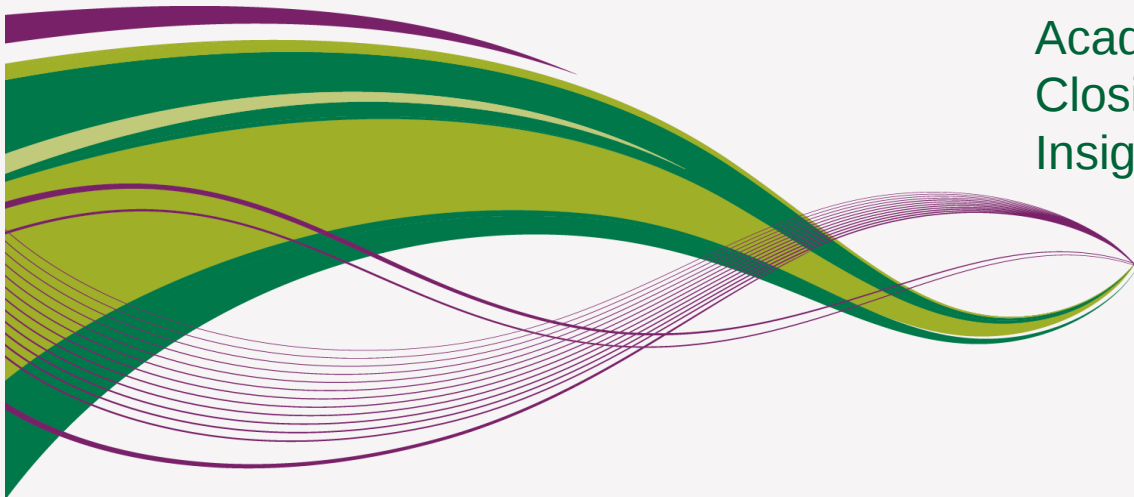


Inclusion Matters: Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in University Spinout Companies - A Case for Action

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Academic Entrepreneurship:
Closing the Gender Gap -
Insights for Building Back Better

Professor Simonetta Manfredi
Women in Higher Education
Advance-HE 25th February 2021

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Physical Sciences
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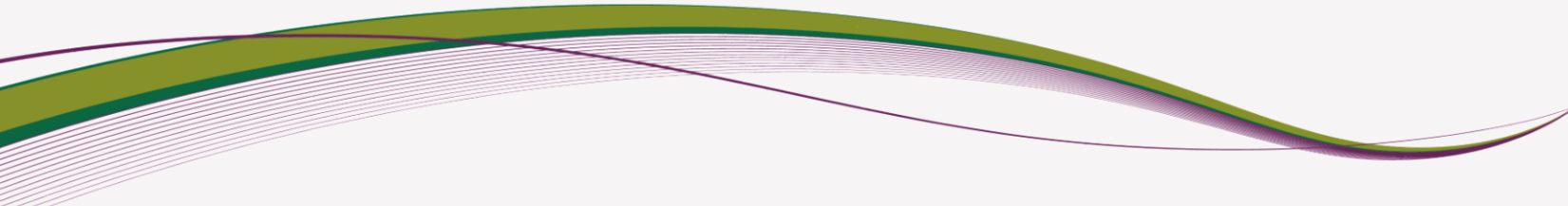
Academic entrepreneurship

Professor Linda King

Linda King is a Professor of Virology at Oxford Brookes University and the co-founder of Oxford Expression Technologies a spinout company from Oxford Brookes University. Her company has been awarded funding from Innovate UK to support a partnership with Vaxine Pty Ltd to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. This is based on producing the virus spike protein in insect cells using an insect virus to deliver the spike gene into the cells. The cells act as a bio-factory to produce spike protein which is then purified to use as vaccine. This is an alternative technology to those being used by the currently approved vaccines being rolled out in the UK. It will provide further choices over the coming years.



Women and Spinouts: A case for Action



Researching

- Sex-disaggregated overview of women's participation in spinouts
- Understand barriers and enablers to increase women's participation in spinout companies leadership

Embedding

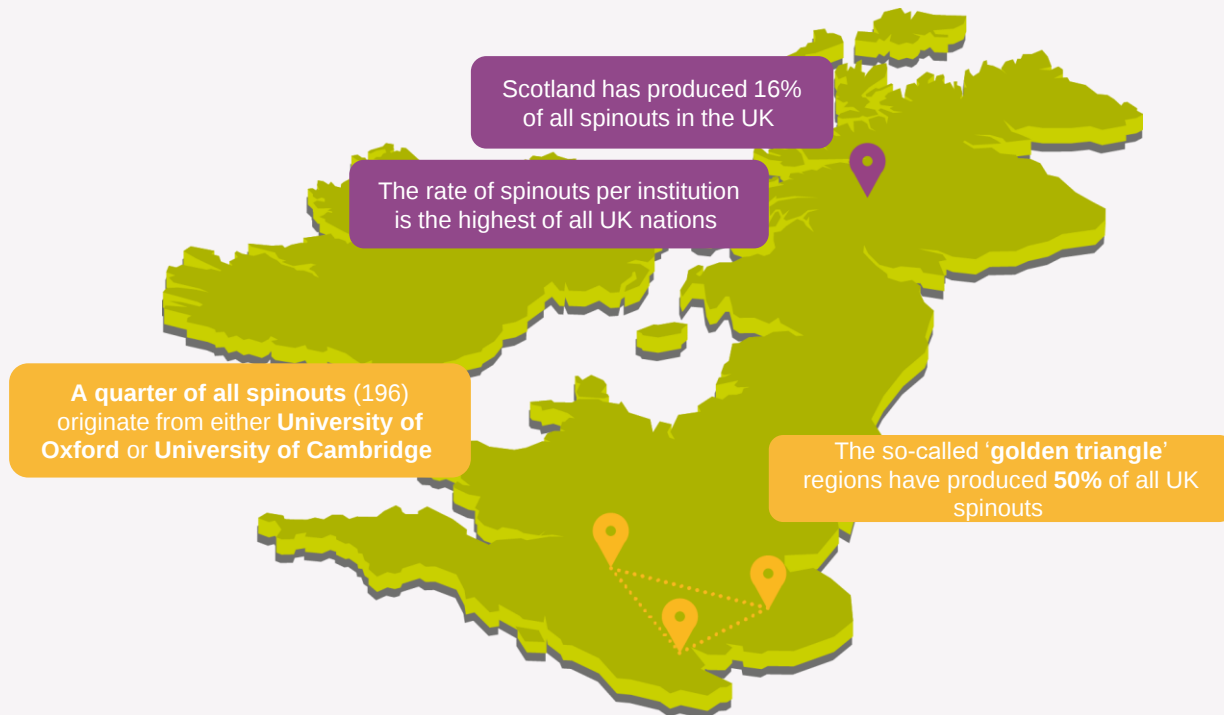
- Raise awareness
- Identify women role models
- Develop mentoring opportunities

Innovating

- Collaborative initiatives with industry
- Case studies of successful women's founders
- Develop tools to promote inclusive academic entrepreneurship

KEY FINDINGS: GEOGRAPHY

A polarised ecosystem for spinouts across the UK

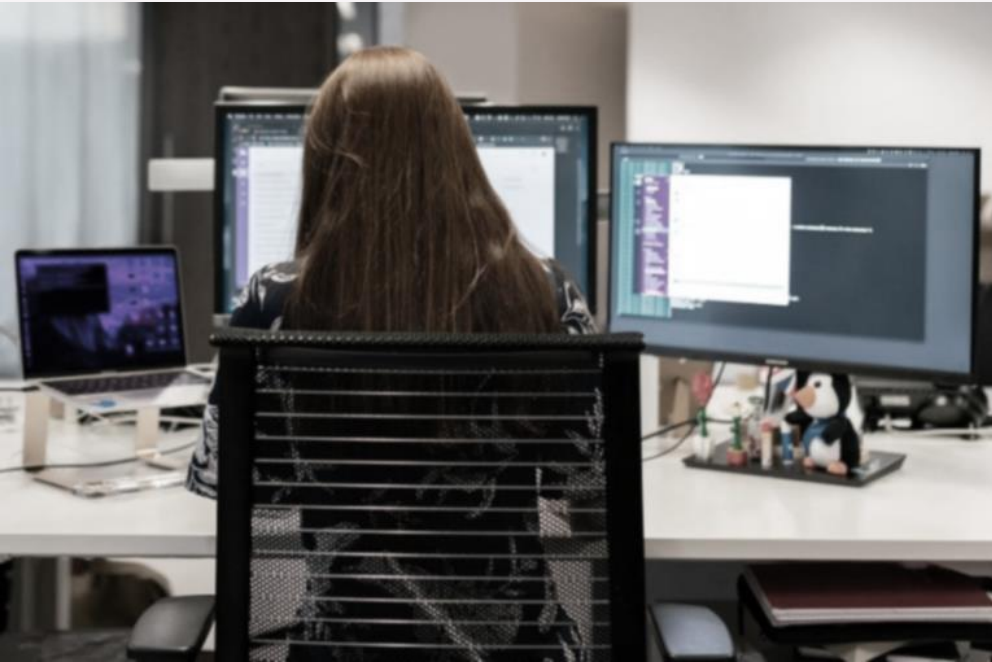


KEY FINDINGS: GOVERNANCE

Founders – the ideas



Findings



Motivation

Shared challenges

Investment

Stereotypes

Motivation – to make a difference



‘It’s every academic’s dream to have your technology applied to products’ [woman founder]

*‘For me it was all about getting this into humans and seeing whether it actually worked or not.’
[woman founder]*

‘You can only do so much research for research’s sake’ [man founder]

Motivation – freedom and flexibility



'When I came back from maternity for the third time I was really wondering how I was going to juggle everything.' [women founder]

'I didn't like the 9-5 environment [...] sometimes I want to take Fridays off and travel, so it's really having the flexibility with my time, it seems to really be important to me.' [man founder]

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[woman founder]

thrown in at the deep end.' [woman founder]

things are to a business setting.' [woman founder]

Shared challenges – finding time



‘You have to accept that you are not going to have the work/life balance that you might want.’
[man founder]

‘They don’t take into account that you’ve got to do all your other jobs [...] I’m fulltime with the university, you’re just having to squeeze it in where you can.’ [man founder]

‘It was kind of viewed as almost being a little bit grubby, not quite academic enough, not really what we do.’ [woman founder]

Investment – dominated by men



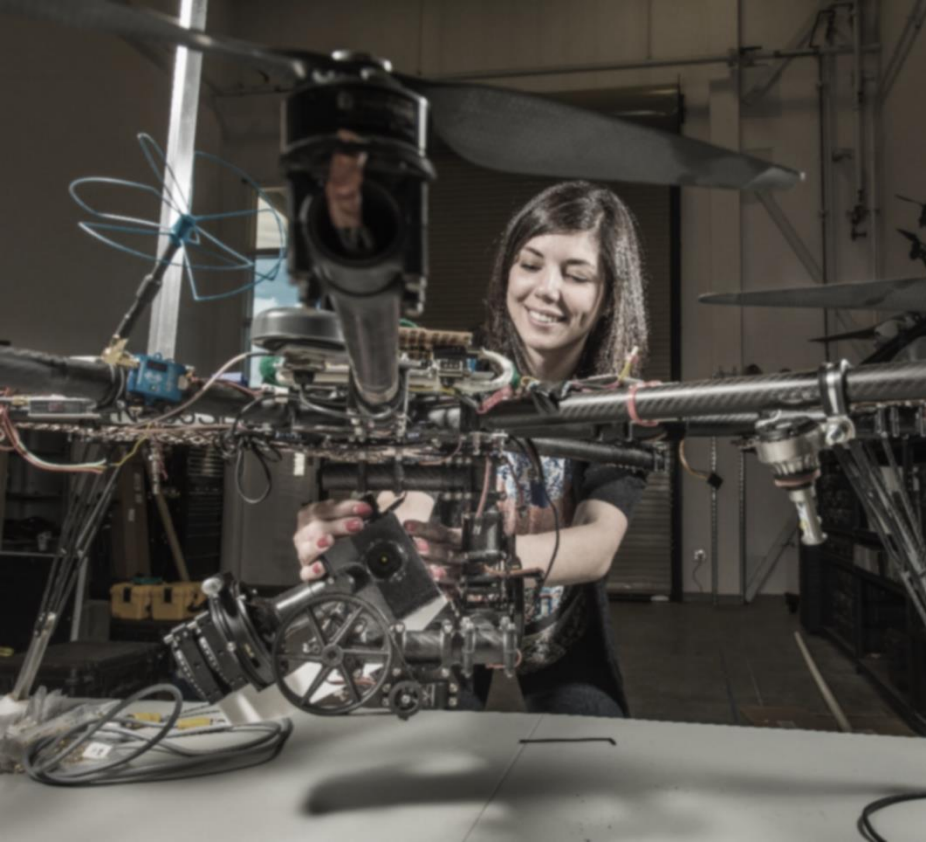
‘predominantly men pitching to men’

[woman founder]

‘I like the fact that my name doesn’t give away if I’m a man or a woman so by default they expect a man coming to talk about oil and gas...and a woman comes.’ [woman founder]

‘I don’t think I’ve ever spoken to a female investor who was also technical.’ [woman founder]

Stereotypes



'I'd blow dried my hair and I was wearing lipstick and a nice top and they literally said to me, 'Could you put laser goggles on and could you tie up your hair and do you have like a jumper and could you wipe off your lipstick?' [woman founder]

'We were discussing about how women are perceived in business and said put your hand up if you've been accused of sleeping with somebody to get to your position of CEO. Every single woman put their hand up.' [woman founder]

Recommendations

For HEIs and the wider spinout ecosystem:

Enhance visibility of women founders as role models and mentors

TTOs should be encouraged to foster more diverse networks of expertise

Set up specific funding opportunities for women and underrepresented minorities

Academic entrepreneurship programmes that are gender sensitive and recognise intersecting inequalities.

Policies and practices should be developed to allow researchers to balance an academic career with commercialisation of research and spinout leadership

Academic entrepreneurship and spinout companies should be properly recognised and rewarded in the academic promotion process

Inclusive academic entrepreneurship: identifying and overcoming barriers to commercialising research



<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/women-and-spinouts/>



[@womenspinouts](https://twitter.com/womenspinouts)



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