

The University of Alicante (UA) has more than 3,000 employees dedicated to provide quality education to almost 40,000 students every year. It offers graduate, post-graduate and doctoral studies in a wide range of subjects under the six faculties, five university schools in the province and 75 departments. Besides delivering knowledge to and shaping the future of the students, UA has been paying extra attention to the research and innovation management.

Understanding the importance and the impact of innovation, research and development to the society, an approximate €18 million budget has been allocated to scientific research activities in UA where hosts five research centres in the field of Water, Environment, Geographical Analysis and International Economy. Moreover, the university owns an Industrial Experimentation Area and provides a range of research services such as Pilots Plants, Laboratories, Data Process Centre, Advanced Information and Documentation Systems, European Data Centre, Science Park, Employment Advisory Office, Business Training Area, Transfer of Research Results Office, and a Mediterranean European Link Centre.

In order to efficiently manage the research and innovation activities led by over 200 research teams at 15 research institutes of UA, the Secretary of Scientific Instrumentation and Technology, Secretary of Technology and Research Transfer and Secretary of Institutional Development and Promotion of Research under the Office of Vice President for Research, Development and Innovation are to supervise some 700 research projects funded by public institutions as well as industrial partners. In addition, UA is committed to promoting university research, supporting the creation of spin-off companies, linking technology brokerage, providing continuous professional development...etc.

Among the three Secretaries, the Secretary of Technology and Research Transfer are specially deployed to innovation support service together with its five sub-units, especially the Science Park and Technology Transfer Office (TTO) that are in mutual cooperation.

Sitting next to the main campus of UA, the proximity enables the Science Park to have efficient communication with and maximum support from the university. The establishment of the Park, which is specialised in research activities of industry, humanities, socio-economy, life and environment, and basic sciences, is to attract technology-based companies and activities, stimulate the growing of local advanced technology companies, encourage the creation of innovative companies as well as provide assistance in development, transfer and use of advanced technology and knowledge.

The five divisions of the Park facilitate the knowledge flow, communication between public and private sectors, creation of new technology-based business or spin-off processes, by providing technical as well as administrative and management services, such as, science and technology consulting service, patent registration consulting service, legislation consulting service, accounting, consultation of setting up business, translation services, training courses, hazardous and toxic waste disposal...etc.

Furthermore, the Innovation Office, a common unit with TTO, is in collaboration with the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade offers a series of service to small and medium enterprises to improve productivity through technological solutions.

On the other hand, the highly qualified team of 35 of the TTO is one of the 170 offices in Spain and has joined the RED OTRI, a Spanish network of universities' Officers for Transfer of Research Results aimed at promoting the production of knowledge in Spanish universities according to the requirements of its environment and facilitating its transfer.

Three particular sections of TTO, innovation office, university-industry relations and intellectual property rights (IPR) area, are to provide assistance and professional advice to the public in regional, national and European R&D projects, R&D contracts with industry, R&D economic management, intellectual property, technology transfer and technology offer.

UA plays a significant role in connecting universities and industries at regional and national level. TTO has a wide network with technology-based companies and expertise to deliver technology promotion plan, technology portfolio, technology audits and public funding search, which help researchers commercialise its research results or respond to companies on their technology requests.

Last year, UA had over 800 R&D projects with regional, national, European and international institutions that brought to the university a total sum of more than €22 million and nonetheless, 50 patents were granted over the past five years while 12 were from last year.

Concerning the R&D researches and technology transfer, IPR should be also taken into account. Therefore, UA has set up a team specialised in handling IPR enquiries, which assists the university in managing IPEuropAware, previously known as IPR-HELPDESK, a European Commission funded research and technological development projects in IPR with the participation of 20 National Patent Offices. It offers various services from daily news and events, courses and training, to helpline.

Innovation, R&D and IPR issues are not bounded by countries and in fact, the exchange of knowledge, idea as well as technology is crucial. UA, through the financial support from the EC, has been working continuously on projects with Asian, BRIC and Latin American countries so as to enhance the awareness of IPR and foster the R&D cooperation between Europe and other continents.

The clear institutional structure, numerous research institutions with sufficient financial support, well-developed infrastructure and experience in managing worldwide R&D related projects, UA remains offering assistance to the public while keep upgrading its knowledge and improving its services.