The Next Step Interview

When people leave a university, there is a risk that a lot of knowledge and relationships walks out the door. We have developed the "The Next Step Interview" concept as a way of preventing this scenario and help strengthening the relationship between the university and the person leaving.

1. Summary

The interview is an offer from the department management to the person leaving. The purpose of the interview is to:

- Find "golden nuggets" to an article about the researcher that can be used in the department's communications
- Identify challenges and ways to address them in the future
- Find any relationships with external partners, special skills, equipment , etcetera that only the researcher is in charge of and need to be forwarded to someone else in a good way
- Identify new ways that the researcher, if she or he want, could help Chalmers in his or her new role

There are also several good reasons for the Innovation Office to do these interviews:

- Provide requested support to departments
- Identify possible verification projects and/or ideas for utilisation

1.1. Roles

The interview is conducted involving of four roles:

- Researcher: is the one being interviewed
- Innovation Advisor: leads the interview and summarises the results sent to all participants
- Communication Officer at the department: focus on spotting "golden nuggets" for the article, and makes that the topic of a follow-up interview
- Department Manager: person responsible for ensuring that the knowledge and relationship assets are taken care of, and that a continuing relationship is created if possible and desired

Although the innovation advisor leads the interview, the others are also encouraged to come up with relevant questions.

1.2. Process

The work is carried out in the following steps :

- The department manager asks the person leaving if he or she is interested in an interview, which takes about 1.5 hours.
- If yes, book a time with all participants and a room with a whiteboard.
- The innovation advisor informs everyone of their roles and describes the working process.
- The innovation advisor sends a letter of invitation (see example below).
- The interview is conducted with the help of the pictures (make sure they are possible to write on), if possible draw the image with the time axis on the board and write directly on it and make a photograph.
- It is important to reiterate the purpose of the interview at the beginning and also describe the next steps at the end.
- After the interview, the innovation advisor makes a summary and agrees with the communication officer and department management before it is sent to the researcher together with the images (see example below).
- The communication officer makes an article and checks it with the person leaving before publishing it.

2. Letter of Invitation - An Example

Topic: Before the interview at DATE - set up and a question

Hello NAME!

I'm very much looking forward to do an interview with you! There are several purposes for the interview, and I hope can bring benefit to everybody involved:

- Find "golden nuggets" for an article about you and your research that can be used in the department's communications
- Identify challenges for Chalmers and society, and ways to address them in the future
- Find relationships with external partners, special skills, equipment etcetera that only you have today and that needs to be forwarded to someone else in a good way.
- Identify new ways that you can help Chalmers in your new role, if you want to.

I will lead the interview while the communication officer and department manager will assist with documentation and questions and also get the task to take care the issues surrounding the handover.

During the interview, I will use some images as a starting point for the conversation, which will focus primarily on what you perceive as highlights and strengths, but also what you have seen as challenges and how you addressed them. The questions will affect the entire knowledge triangle, that is, how you have been working on research, training and utilization. Of course, also some questions to focus future to catch your things that can be improved and made new.

You do not need to prepare yourself, but if you have the opportunity please bring some materials to support us in the interview, such as photos, books, articles, models, prototypes, etcetera.

If you have questions or concerns please let us know!

Regards,

INNOVATION OFFICE ADVISOR

3. Follow-Up Letter - An Example

Subject: Follow-up on interview DATE - many thanks for the interesting conversation!

Hello NAME!

Many thanks for taking the time to talk to us! It is always exciting to hear how many factors that play into what happens in life. We have tried to summarize some of our impressions below along with suggestions for the next step (see below). We hope that you are interested in this! We also send the pictures we showed you and created in case you can benefit from them.

DEPARTMENT MANAGER, COMMUNICATION OFFICER and INNOVATION ADVISOR

Ideas for an article

Your account of what you worked on in research, teaching and utilization was filled with interesting facts and reflections. Several of these can be form the basis for communication in terms of an article:

- The importance of creating integrated environments where "basic and applied research" can fertilize each other
- Why XXXX is the future
- When a hobby became research
- Cold War influence on the research focus
- XXX-model now being implemented in various parts
- How collaboration with Chalmers helps companies to remain competitive

COMMUNICATION OFFICER will contact you for a follow-up interview that focuses on one or two of the angles.

Challenges

You talked about the importance of having more industry involvement in education and how to find inspiration from how they work with this in Germany. Here perhaps is an opportunity for you to give advice regarding how Chalmers can develop teaching and contacts to appropriate activities in Germany.

Another challenge you raised was how the students rather than to diversify and get a systemic view, continue with a master in the same field. You may have ideas and experiences to share with those works with software education.

You also talked about the importance of creating integrated environments where "basic and applied research" can fertilize each other as such the XXXXX centre. If you have more concrete ideas about what success factors that are important to take into account, so please feel free to write them down and send to us.

Handover

It seems as if you've already been proactive in terms of sharing your contacts in academia and industry. Given that you will continue to work on a part- time, there are also good opportunities to continue the handover. If you need additional help with the handover, please talk with DEPARTMENT MANAGER.

You also talked about all the ideas for things that could become products and companies. If you have the desire to discuss them to see how the event could be taken further, please talk with DEPARTMENT MANAGER or any of the advisers at the Innovation Office. It's for free and they will help you further to specialists in various fields. See innovationskontor.chalmers.se for more information.

Future collaboration

As it seems, you will continue to work part-time at Chalmers for a while. You can of course also consider whether there are other things you want to do during this time to support the Chalmers. It may be through guest lectures, counselling, continued networking, etcetera. For example, you seemed to have relevant experience on how you have to think about an infrastructure to get it to work. Work is under way on developing instructions for how to develop infrastructures at Chalmers, why your experience may be very relevant and welcome.
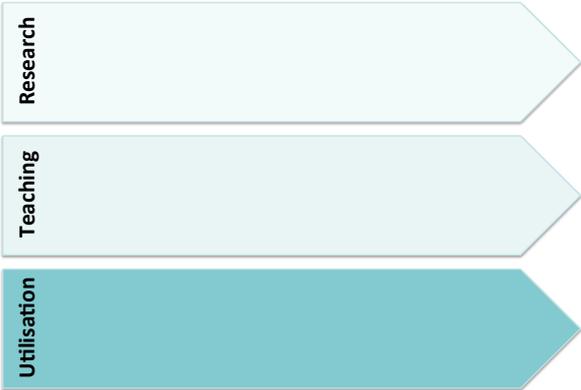
You also talked about possibly writing a book. Please contact the Innovation Office to see if you can get support in doing market research. There is also a checklist of things that are good to keep in mind if you are thinking of writing a textbook. Remember also that
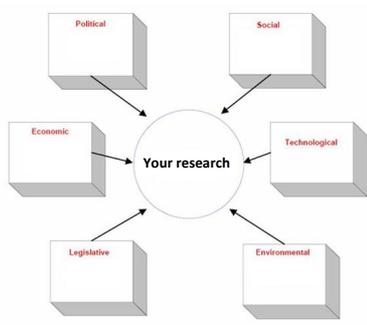
the economic rights of the teaching materials as a teacher at Chalmers produce is shared between the individual and the department. If you write it when you no longer work at Chalmers at all it will be a different matter.
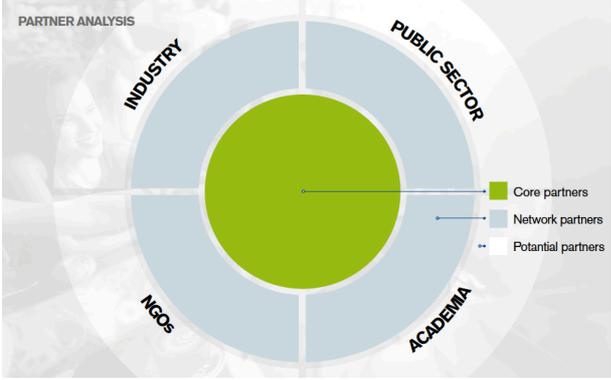
Since you are still employed at Chalmers, you might want to develop your personal webpage at chalmers.se. Today you have added information on publications and collaborations. However, you can add more tabs, such as for teaching, as well as a completely separate tab with information that you decide all by yourself where you for example can describe the impact on society your research has had. This is also an opportunity to not only describe what you have done, but what you want to do.

4. PowerPoint Slides and Interview Questions

See separate PPT document. The first picture (with the timeline) is a good starting point, wheras the other images can be used in any order depending on the course of the interview. The questions are just suggestions. Go with the flow!

Draw it on a whiteboard and take a picture afterwards!	How come you started doing research? How come you came to Chalmers? What is the best with Chalmers? What challenges and opportunities do you see for Chalmers? Looking back, what challenges and highlights do you see in your own career regarding research/teaching/utilisation?

What factors do you think has had the greatest impact on the direction and design of your research?

Can you give an example of when you and your team developed new knowledge that had a positive impact on one or several organisations and/or society at large? How did it happen? What did it feel like? How did it effect your research and teaching?

Can you give me more examples?

Is there anything you'd like to have done more of? Some knowledge that still hasn't gone all the way to having a big impact?

As a researcher, you can take on many different roles in the innovation process. What roles have you had so far? Have they changed during the years? Which ones have you enjoyed the most?

Is there anything you'd like to have done more of?

Can you see yourself continue with some roles in the future?

CHALMERS INNOVATIONSKONTORET **Intellectual Assets** Method Data Model Design Software Invention	Are there knowledge assets you have developed that you are extra proud of? How will they be developed further? By others here at Chalmers? Any intellectual assets you haven't had time to document? What can be done about that?
CHALMERS INNOVATIONSKONTORET PARTNER ANALYSIS INDUSTRY PUBLIC SECTOR NGOs ACADEMIA ■ Core partners ■ Network partners □ Potantial partners	What organisations have you collaborated with? Which contacts have been the most important ones. Why? Is there anyone at Chalmers who now continues the collaboration with these partners? If not, have can we make that happen?
CHALMERS INNOVATIONSKONTORET 1. **Advice to young researchers?** 2. **What have you learned though your research you can apply in your private life?** 3. **Someting you want to tell us that we haven't asked about?** 4. **Anything we can improve regarding the way we do a Next Step Interview?**	(Last questions)

CHALMERS   INNOVATIONSKONTORET

Next Steps

- Article
- Activities related to
  - Contacts/Network
  - Infrastructure
  - Intellectual assets
- New roles/collaboration with Chalmers