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The Role of Mobility and Employee-Driven Relations for University-Industry Collaboration on Innovation

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the role of mobility and employee-driven relations for firms' collaboration on innovation with specific universities. It is argued that personal employee-driven relations and geographical proximity are important determinants for which universities firms decide to collaborate with. Therefore, hiring and mobility of employees can help explain why firms collaborate with specific universities or discontinue collaboration. It is argued that the university of graduation and the field of study of a firm's employees help explain why it collaborate with a specific university. Furthermore, the paper also addresses the importance of developing relations and collaborative experience over time for university-industry collaboration by studying employee-driven relations and collaboration patterns for a large sample of firms over two consecutive Community Innovation Surveys covering the period from 2007-2013. Based on a sample of more than 1,200 innovative firms in Denmark, the study demonstrates that mobility and employee-driven relations (measured by place of education and scientific discipline) influence the likelihood that firms will collaborate with specific universities.