This article investigates the role of a university of applied sciences teacher as a bridge builder between education, RDI and labor market. Generic innovation capability was seen to be a premise for the teacher’s proactive competence needed for bridge building between several actors and activities in networked society. UAS teachers play an important role in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the UAS masters’ education and impact on regional development.

Education for complex world requires new kind of capabilities and competences, especially in the universities of applied sciences which are mandated to contribute especially to regional development. Proactive management rubric, based on interdisciplinary research, was used as a measurement tool for assessing the perceptions of the students and teachers of their proactive competences. Innovation capability was seen as a premise for the broader proactivity competence. Teachers perceived need for development in creative thinking and in the capability of effective goalsetting as part of the outcome orientation competence, two descriptors of the person related competences. Cross-professional communication and networking capability as well as the multi-disciplinary analysis, are descriptors of the behavioural competences needed in order to work in networked society and in order to shuttle between different disciplines and between scientific and practical knowledge. Improvement in establishing dialoguing relationships and shared understanding as part of the first one needs improvements as well as competence addressing multi-disciplinary analysis, more specifically ability to solve complex situations with others. University of applied sciences teachers play a crucial role for the regional development and their proactivity competences need to be upgraded to the level needed.

Keywords: Innovation capability, proactive competence rubric, research and innovation, higher education, regional development.