

**Engineering Professors Council
Minutes of the meeting of the
Engineering, Education, Employability and Skills Committee (EEES)
held on 10th September 2021 via Zoom**

Present via Zoom

Georgina Harris (GH) Chair, Johnny Rich (JR), Catherine Hobbs (CH), Clive Neal-Sturgess (CNS), Kamel Hawwash (KH), John Mitchell (JM), Abel Nyampfene (AN), Beverley Gibbs (BG), Sravanthi Sashikumar (SS), Rinkal Desai (RD), Rachel Long (RL), Steve Faulkner (SFa) (as observer) and Henri Huijberts (HH) (from agenda item 5)

With

Vicky Elston (VE) and Stella Fowler (SFo)

Apologies

Mike Sutcliffe (MS), Michael Fernando (MF) and Chike Odouza (CO)

		Action ref
1.	<i>Apologies for absence</i>	
	Apologies were received and noted as above.	
2.	<i>Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2021</i>	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed. Previous minutes to have draft watermark removed and reloaded to website as confirmed minutes. Action: VE	2109-01
3.	<i>Matters arising not on the agenda</i>	
	<p>2006-12: Georgina suggested that the new EPC website made use of infographics rather than substantial text to describe best practice as a fast and easily digestible format for the EPC academic network to use.</p> <p>2102-04: Regarding the action for Committee members who know of a colleague who has suitable case studies for the Emerging Stronger project to contact BG or Gary Wood, applications are now closed. Many cases have been submitted from a wide range of institutions.</p> <p>2102-07: Regarding the action for JR to reference Foundation Degrees in the press release for the publication of the Social Mobility report, JR said that the action is</p>	

	<p>complete. Good coverage has been received and a blog for Wonkhe (drafted by VH, the EPC Kickstart employee who has now come to an end of her 6 months contract) needs to be finalised.</p> <p>2102-14: Regarding the action for SF (with help from JM) to design a brief survey on universities awarding unaccredited degrees to send to the EPC membership for responses, this was actioned and a detailed report sent to the Engineering Council, but informal feedback is that the Engineering Council has decided to not take any further action. The formal decision of the committee has not yet been communicated.</p> <p>2102-15: The action for JR to send SF details of an email (sent by the RAEng to EPC President Prof Colin Turner) with information about practice in sustainability for SF to include in the next EPC Bulletin is complete. There was then a discussion about the possibility of the Committee working to create a 'green' toolkit. It was agreed this will be considered at some point once work on the Ethics toolkit is complete.</p> <p>All other actions were either completed or to be discussed on the agenda.</p> <p>JR thanked all Committee members who helped with the launch of the Social Mobility report and the Emerging Stronger project.</p>	
4.	Updates	
	<p>'Engineering engineering'</p> <p>JR said that the 6th July <i>Engineering Engineering: A Provocation</i> event had been arranged as a result of Kel Fidler's paper. It was a successful event which worked well with Kel providing a provocation on various themes and then panellists leading a discussion with many questions and interaction from the delegates. There was a lot to cover in the short time and some issues are ongoing so will need further discussion.</p> <p>Engineering Ethics</p> <p>JR said that the project (commissioned by the RAEng) currently running to produce Engineering Ethics case studies is being led by Prof Sarah Hitt with Prof Raffaella Ocone leading a case studies advisory group and they now have around 20 case studies.</p> <p>The original idea was to create a toolkit followed by a group of case studies, but with the RAEng-funded production of case studies now almost complete, the toolkit will be created from the case studies.</p> <p>The current phase of Sarah's work as project leader is now being wrapped up, but the project will continue with hopefully Raffaella and Sarah staying involved.</p> <p>JR asked what members would like from the project and this provoked a discussion with ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sample lesson plans for introducing Ethics into the curriculum would be useful - all agreed that students like to discuss historic cases of someone speaking up if they can see something ethically incorrect. This can be difficult as ethical cases not always black and white. A case can become more relevant for students to discuss and consider their own ethical stance 	

	JR said he will report back to the Ethics advisory board and encourage them to continue working together after the official end of the Ethics project. Action: JR	2109-02
5.	<i>Degree Apprenticeships Consultation</i>	
	<p>SF presented her paper with a draft response to the consultation. This paper was included in the meeting papers and the full consultation had been distributed to the Committee members just before the meeting.</p> <p>She said the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education are proposing 5 changes to improve Degree Apprenticeships, and that all 5 changes were raised by work done by the EEES working group on Degree Apprenticeships a couple of years ago.</p> <p>In her draft response, SF has responded 'yes' to each of 5 changes. The Engineering Council had approached the EPC asking for joint response to the consultation and they have commented on SF's draft response (comments included in SF's paper) and they had asked to endorse the EPC's response. The deadline for responses is Wednesday 22nd September.</p> <p>SF then stepped through the proposed changes and each was discussed by Committee members, with the main points being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is good to see that the EPC's previous work on Degree Apprenticeships has had extensive impact; - IMeCHE have a long-established scheme – MPDS (Monitored Professional Development Scheme) – and all members agreed it should be included with Degree Apprenticeships consultation feedback; - Students don't always stay for their EPA (End Point Assessment) after they have completed their degree (often this is because they change employers – more common in civil and surveying degrees) which means the university misses out on 20% of the funding. All members endorsed the idea of integrating the EPA into the degree assessment; - when students reflect on the experience of their degree such as in the NSS survey, this can reflect badly on a university as employers' focus is not usually on providing a rounded student experience. <p>SF then asked the Committee how to incorporate the Engineering Council's comments into the final consultation response. This provoked more discussion, particularly on EPAs and who does the assessing and how that work is checked/approved.</p> <p>SF will incorporate comments from the discussions into her response before submitting before the deadline. Action: SF</p>	2109-03
6.	<i>OfS Standards and Quality Consultation</i>	
	<p>SF led the discussion on the latest OfS Standards and Quality consultation - https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/consultation-on-quality-and-standards-conditions/</p>	

	<p>This is a follow-up to a previous consultation that the Committee had responded to at the beginning of the year and the deadline for responses is the end of September.</p> <p>SF said that many of the EPC's comments in the previous consultation submission were commonly recognised in the overall feedback, but had been rejected by the OfS and she asked Committee members for their thoughts on the latest consultation. The discussions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What problem is the consultation trying to solve (as generally UK's HE system is internationally highly regarded); - STEM degrees are different from other degrees, so it is difficult to have the same standards and quality across all types of degree; - The consultation doesn't seem have an aim and it is difficult to see how the results can be tested. <p>It was agreed that SF and JR would draft a relatively short response, referring back to EPC's response to the previous consultation, which haven't been taken into account, and the fact that the UK's university system is already highly regarded internationally. The Committee will then be given a short time to provide comments before SF submits the response before the deadline. Action: SF</p>	2109-04
7.	Proposed future projects	
	<p>Study skills gaps and interventions</p> <p>JR said there is a concern that students coming into HE now may have gaps in their knowledge due to education disruption during the pandemic. He asked 'Is there something we can do to help overcome this for engineering students? Could we campaign on foundation years? Or wait until after Comprehensive Spending Review (expected in October/November)?'</p> <p>It was agreed that JR and GH would draft some ideas as a basis for a discussion at the next meeting. Action: JR/GH</p> <p>New Approaches event on new structures: microcredentials, part-time and short courses</p> <p>JR said he has some ideas for potential speakers – Rajay Naik from Skilled Education and a speaker from Coursera. All agreed that it would be good to have a webinar on the subject in the not too distant future.</p>	2109-05
8.	Horizon Scanning and Scope of Work	
	<p>There was no time to discuss this item and it was agreed that the Committee has plenty of work for the foreseeable future anyway.</p>	
9.	Any other business	
	<p>There was none.</p>	
10	Date of next meeting	
	<p>VE to set up a Doodle poll to find a suitable date/time in February 2022 for the next meeting. Action: VE</p>	2109-06

Action log

Reference	Agreed Action	By
2109-01	Remove draft watermark and reload confirmed minutes of 2 nd October meeting to website	VE
2109-02	Report back to the Ethics advisory board on comments from Committee members and encourage them to continue working together after the official end of the Ethics project.	JR
2109-03	Incorporate comments from the discussions into her response to the Degree Apprenticeship consultation before submitting before the deadline.	SF
2109-04	Draft a relatively short response to the OfS Standards and Quality consultation, referring back to EPC's comments for the previous consultation response which haven't been taken into account and the fact that the UK's university system is already highly regarded internationally. The Committee will then be given a short time to provide comments before SF to submit the response before the deadline.	SF/JR/All
2109-05	Draft some ideas about how to help new engineering students, who may have gaps in their knowledge due to the pandemic, as a basis for a discussion at the next meeting.	JR/GH
2109-06	Set up a Doodle poll to find a suitable date/time in February 2022 for the next meeting.	VE

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