



## Newsletter



### Message from the President



### Judging Research Excellence

EPC consulted members before responding to the Higher Education Funding Council's consultation on the successor for the 5-yearly Research Assessment Exercise for rating the quality of research undertaken in University departments. Key to the proposals is the removal of peer review and the use of a system based on metrics. However, 97% of EPC respondents disagreed with the use of citations as a metric in judging research quality.

*97% of EPC respondents disagreed with the use of citations as a metric in judging research quality in the new Research Excellence Framework*

Leading the response for the EPC, Professor Tony Unsworth of Durham University was quoted in the Guardian newspaper "we want to keep peer review. We would like to have a system that is easier but it really must be fit for purpose. Measures are necessary but must be meaningful".

The full response is available on the EPC website [www.epc.ac.uk](http://www.epc.ac.uk).

### True Cost of Teaching Engineering

With growing concern over the sustainability of Engineering education at current government funding levels, the EPC and Engineering Technology board jointly commissioned an independent study of the costs of undergraduate teaching.

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*Welcome to this, the latest in our occasional series of Newsletters. It is important to us that as many senior academics as possible know what we are doing and get the opportunity to participate, in however small a way in what we do.*

*Please feel free to keep in touch. If you feel that there are issues that we should be working on, please let us know.*

**Professor Ray Allen,  
Sheffield University**

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The report highlighted the seriousness of the situation and the compromises University departments have made to maintain their programmes.

Co-chair of the study, Professor Helen Atkinson of the EPC, was reported in the February edition of the Professional Engineer “if we continue to operate with the deficits we will have less hands on teaching ... not only will our home students be damaged but we will fail to attract foreign students”.

The shortfall in funding is revealed to be as high as 40%, and the report calls for a funding increase of a minimum of 14% to maintain standards.

The report is very timely as HEFCE is currently engaged in a review of the current funding bands for University teaching in England and Wales.

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## **Diplomas to Replace Traditional A-levels?**



*EPC has led the development of a 14-19 Engineering Maths module*

With the government determined to see the new 14-19 Engineering diploma as the qualification of choice to eventually replace A-levels, an EPC working group led by Professor Fred Maillardet has focused on the need to improve mathematics qualifications for entrants to engineering degrees.

The group has developed a specialist Engineering Mathematics module which is expected to be adopted by the diploma awarding bodies. Passing this module, alongside the 14-19 engineering diploma, is likely to become part of the entry requirement for accredited engineering degrees.

EPC has been arranging workshops for Universities, Colleges and employers on the implications of the new diploma. For details see the EPC website [www.epc.ac.uk](http://www.epc.ac.uk).

## **Events**

The **Annual Congress** will be held at Warwick University from 31st March-2nd April 2008.

The congress addresses topics of major importance for University Engineering:

- The future of engineering education
- Research collaboration, links and funding
- International issues in engineering education
- Research excellence framework

*With leading speakers from organisations including **EPSRC**, **HEFCE** and the new **European Research Council**, this year's event is a "must" for those interested in engineering research and teaching.*

***Further details** of the congress and other events are available on the EPC website [www.epc.ac.uk](http://www.epc.ac.uk)*