



## EPC Bulletin | July 2021 | Twitter [@EngProfCouncil](https://twitter.com/EngProfCouncil)

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As the academic year draws to a close, the EPC has continued to host online events for its members. Early this month, our latest online webcast, 'Engineering Engineering: A Provocation', saw the launch of Professor Kel Fidler's titular paper – which sparked a lively discussion on some of the biggest issues facing Engineering higher education. For information and details of future events, see below.

The EPC's AGM also saw the role of EPC President pass to Prof Mike Sutcliffe, as Prof Colin Turner now takes on the position of EPC Vice-President.

In other news, the Government has decided to go ahead with planned funding cuts in England: Arts courses and London institutions have been hit. Even though Engineering funding should be untouched, the institution-level implications of cuts may have worrying repercussions. Big changes are also likely to follow with the Government's now announced plans to roll out T-levels, and a new TEF is expected this autumn.

In the meantime, have a wonderful summer.

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## EPC news

### Engineering Engineering: A Provocation, 6th July 2021

The EPC's latest online webcast saw the launch of a highly provocative and personal reflection by Professor Kel Fidler, CEng HonFIET FEng, former Chair of the Engineering Council and former Vice Chancellor of Northumbria University, in which he offered some radical solutions to the issues facing Engineering higher education. Each topic was addressed by leading experts on the issue, chaired by outgoing EPC President Prof Colin Turner. These included:

- Elizabeth Donnelly, Chief Executive, Women's Engineering Society
- Hilary Leever, Chief Executive, Engineering UK
- Tom Sheldon, Senior Press Manager, The Science Media Centre
- Prof Mike Sutcliffe, Deputy Dean, TEDI-London, and EPC President-Elect.

In particular, the event aimed to examine four themes: the role of outreach in promoting engineering, how we might attract more women into engineering, the public perception of

engineering and the distinction between design engineering and engineering science. To view a short summary of the event on the EPC's website, [click here](#).

### **EPC AGM, 6th July 2021**

Following the 'Engineering Engineering' webcast, the EPC's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was also held online. During the AGM, elections were held for the two-year positions of Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer.

Prof David Harrison was re-elected as Honorary Secretary and Prof Stephanie Haywood as Honorary Treasurer.

Prof Mike Sutcliffe also officially began his term as EPC President after taking over from Prof Colin Turner, who steps down to the role of Vice President for the coming year. More details can be found below.

### **New EPC President, Prof Mike Sutcliffe**

The EPC's President-Elect, Professor Mike Sutcliffe has recently started work as the new EPC President. Prof Sutcliffe, who is Deputy Dean at TEDI-London, takes over from Prof Colin Turner, Interim Dean of Learning Enhancement at Ulster University, whose two-year term of office has come to an end.

Having chaired the EPC's Engineering Education, Employability and Skills Committee, Prof Sutcliffe was elected as President-Elect in 2020 and has served a year as Vice President. He was instrumental in leading much of the EPC's influential work on degree apprenticeships, a topic he had already become expert in when helping to establish the initial Degree Apprenticeship Programme at Kingston University, where he served as Pro-Vice Chancellor and Dean of Science, Engineering and Computing.

Prior to that he has also worked as Head of the School of Chemical Engineering and Analytical Science at the University of Manchester, where he achieved global top 25 status in QS World Rankings and a top 3 position in the UK in REF 2014.

To read the full press release regarding the announcement on the EPC's website, [click here](#).

## **Upcoming events**

### **EPC SECTORAL GROUP EVENT: 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Manufacturing Research ICMR, 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

The ICMR2021 conference, incorporating the 35th National Conference in Manufacturing Research Virtual Conference, will run fully online in September hosted virtually by the University of Derby. COMEH continues to support the conference team to provide support around publications reviews, technical advice to the online platform and working with the publishers. Further details on the conference are available [here](#).

### **EPC ONLINE EVENT: The Crucible Project, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

During the course of the 2020 Annual Congress, *Industry & Academia: Supercharging the Crucible*, members explored the interface between industry and academia and some of the challenges to developing the relationship between industry and academia. This highlighted five areas of mutual interest:

- Universities' and businesses' shared role in regional development
- Collaborating with industry for teaching and learning
- Knowledge exchange
- Research
- Graduate employability and recruitment

The EPC now wants to build on this by launching the *Crucible Project*, an initiative to help our members build better industry links by sharing experiences and developing resources for all EPC members to access. We are planning to hold an online Industry-Academia event, featuring a diverse range of case studies of innovative and engaging collaborations between academics and industry, on 16th February 2022 and to produce a toolkit (or a series of toolkits) which members can access from the EPC website.

If you would like to get involved, see the opportunities section below, or register your interest [here](#).

### **EPC EVENT: Congress 2022 – A Better World, 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

The next physical Congress, on our two-year theme *A Better World*. Congress will continue to focus on ethics, sustainability and recovery. It will be held at UWE, Bristol, from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## **In the news**

### **CUTS TO ARTS COURSE FUNDING**

Despite strong opposition from the likes of the education sector, as well as celebrity figures, the Government has announced that it will continue with its planned cuts to funding for university Arts courses in England. The OfS also confirmed that the London weighting for university funding is also set to be removed.

Funding is intended to be removed from high-cost creative subjects and redistributed to high-cost subjects in other areas, such as medicine and STEM. This may sound like positive news for Engineering departments, but their per-student funding is unlikely to change and cuts to other subject areas may mean that STEM areas need to bear a greater proportion of institutional costs.

### **TEF REVIEW**

The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is set to be reviewed in a consultation this autumn. The new scheme, as yet unnamed, will be published in a similar way to the current one – albeit with new ratings of 'excellence'.

### **T-LEVELS**

Earlier this month the Government also announced that as of 2023, the three main Level Three qualifications would be A-levels, T-levels and apprenticeships. This means that almost all vocational qualifications (such as BTECs) will be axed, especially if they are deemed "poor quality". The

Government has asserted that this will “remove low-quality qualifications that lack job prospects”. They also require that courses will now have to prove why they should be funded.

There is [widespread concern](#) that the move will leave students without alternatives to academic qualifications. Some fear that many students could simply be left out if the T-level roll-out does not go smoothly.

### **OfS CHALLENGE COMPETITION**

The OfS has also announced a new “Challenge competition” to “trial higher education short courses”, as part of the Government’s ‘Lifelong Loan Entitlement’. The competition will hand out funding for new short courses at Level 4-6 to be developed. The competition is set to launch in August 2021, with more details to follow.

## **Opportunities**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer Committee**

The Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer (RIKT) Committee: Committee has a focus on engineering research, enterprise, innovation and knowledge transfer activities at a national and international level. At our core we wish to achieve impact from the engineering research in the UK and raise opportunities for collaboration between industry and academia.

We are looking to expand the committee by welcoming new members in some or all of the following areas:

- Industry-facing academics or academics active in research, innovation and knowledge transfer
- Industry members to offer their insights and assist us in ensuring engineering research maximises innovation and knowledge transfer and impact
- Industry-based visiting professors (current and previous)

If you would like to discuss the work of the Committee, join the Committee, or nominate yourself, please contact [Andy Alderson](#) in the first instance.

### **CALL FOR CASE STUDIES: The EPC Crucible Project**

A quick reminder that there’s still time to indicate your interest in the EPC’s Crucible Project (see above). EPC members are invited to submit case studies, in whatever form, on the above areas of interest. We would especially welcome case studies created collaboratively between industry and academia partners. If you would like to get involved, please register your interest [here](#).

The panel (members of the EPC Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer (RIKT) Committee) will be in touch to discuss your submission shortly to enable work to proceed over the summer. The deadline for the call for contributions is September 30th.

Please also share this opportunity with your Industrial Advisory Board or those within your university that deal with engineering industry collaboration and KTPs.



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