



EPC Bulletin | March 2022 | Twitter [@EngProfCouncil](https://twitter.com/EngProfCouncil)

The EPC continues to respond at pace and in detail to the flood of sector consultations on our members' behalf. We have challenged the OfS student outcomes and TEF consultations – proposals which may damage access and diversity in engineering, lead to grade inflation, value outcomes beyond universities' direct control and create a problematic “requires improvement” TEF band. The consultation work is not yet slowing down; the EPC is currently confirming approaches and responses to several other consultations including the Augar response and the design of the UK's future research assessment system. See more details on all these consultation and the EPC's responses below....

We have also been busy organising events – and are delighted to announce that **Dame Judith Hackitt**, Chair of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, will be giving the public lecture at Congress on the 7th June. She joins a host of other prominent speakers and an action-packed Congress schedule. See more information about this and other exciting EPC events below...

In wider news – Michelle Donelan announced the government will not be considering a post-qualifications admission system at this time and BEIS have confirmed the £39.8 billion research and development budget for 2022-25 – with UKRI allocated over £25 billion. These investments are said to help support priorities key to the UK's prosperity listed as: climate change, levelling up opportunities, clean tech and AI. See more below....

Finally – the EPC is hiring! We have two highly flexible remote working roles currently available in our team. If this sounds interesting, see more information below in the EPC news and Opportunities sections below...

EPC news

VICKY ELSTON: 17 years with the EPC!

This year we will be saying goodbye to Vicky, who as many of you will know, is the EPC's incredible administrative manager. She has enabled the EPC to run smoothly and efficiently over the past 17 years. We are very sad to see her go in the next few months and the whole team is wishing her all the best for the future!

EPC VACANCIES

We currently have two vacancies at the EPC: 1) [Administration and Membership Manager](#) and 2)

[Editorial and Admin Assistant](#) – if you are interested in either of these roles or know someone who might be, more details are available in the opportunities section below or on the [EPC website](#).

CONSULTATION RESPONSE: OfS student outcomes and teaching excellence

In January, the Office for Students (OfS) issued three related consultations with detailed proposals on their approach to regulating quality and standards in higher education. The EPC produced brief [summaries](#) of each of the consultations' key points to help distil the detail for our members and introduce the general policy implications for engineering. The EPC has now responded to the proposed changes to [Student Outcomes](#) and [TEF](#) (use the links to find the full responses). Regarding Student Outcomes – we highlighted concerns that the proposals will damage access and diversity in engineering, may lead to grade inflation, estimate the value of HE too narrowly, value outcomes that are beyond universities' direct control and may discourage educational innovation. For TEF – our response also highlighted key points which included: the distinctive purpose TEF serves in spotlighting teaching excellence is not clear; we are unconvinced that a system of badges is a sufficiently nuanced representation of an institution's reputation; and we are unconvinced that the proposed fourth band – “requires improvement” - will serve a positive purpose, it will simply undermine reputation without providing any information about what improvement might be required. Overall – the EPC is calling for the OfS to abandon its regulation plans for student outcomes and to instead adopt measures of 'learning gain' and 'value added'. Read our [Student Outcomes](#) and [TEF](#) consultation responses, or a summary of the key points in a blog on the [EPC website](#) for more information.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE: CEIAG

The Education Committee recently held an [inquiry](#) on the effectiveness of the careers advice given to students – as part of a review of how well the current system for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is working. The EPC supported a joint response led by EngineeringUK to provide evidence for this inquiry. This response urges the government to consider recommendations including publishing a new careers strategy for England; rapidly expanding careers hubs to cover all secondary schools and ensuring there is a dedicated STEM leader at each; and embedding careers into STEM curriculum content. See more details of these recommendations and the evidence behind them in the full response [here](#). You can also read a blog by the EPC's CEO, Johnny Rich on what CEIAG is, and what the key points in his own submission to the Select Committee were – see this blog [here](#).

CONSULTATION RESPONSE: Delivering a UK Science & Technology Strategy

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee is conducting an inquiry into the Government's plans to deliver a UK science and technology strategy. The inquiry is considering what such a strategy should look like and how the UK's research and innovation system can deliver it. The EPC has now responded to this inquiry's call for written evidence on behalf of our members. In our response we highlighted key points on this topic including: that engineering education is critical to the Government's levelling up missions, but there needs to be investment in jobs and infrastructure not just in raising skills; that we are deeply concerned about the future of Horizon funding – not only with regards to replacing the potential loss of funding but also in fostering international partnerships. Other points include the value of engineers in post-pandemic recovery; how to approach the skills shortages in STEM; and that the UK's entrepreneurial environment needs to be adjusted. Finally – we highlighted concerns that the downward pressure on HE costs may stifle the quality and availability of engineering education and that the government needs to

urgently address the obstacles for international engineering academics and engineers to work in the UK. Read the EPC's full response [here](#).

Upcoming events

EPC ONLINE EVENT: Introducing the Engineering Ethics Toolkit, 5th May 2022

The EPC will be holding a live webinar to introduce our Engineering Ethics Toolkit, a growing resource designed to help engineering educators integrate ethics content into teaching. In this webinar, a panel of those involved in this innovative project will be discussing the engineering ethics scholarship and pedagogy behind this toolkit. Phase 1 of the ethics project, already available on the [EPC website](#), consists of 12 ethics case studies and 3 guidance articles – the panel will discuss the aims of these resources, how the Advisory Group put them together, how they can be used by engineering educators and why this is important to integrate into teaching. You will also hear about opportunities to get involved in the work of Phase 2. More information and how to book will be circulated soon, this event is not to be missed!

EPC ONLINE EVENT: Stackable credentials, Spring 2022 (date TBC)

The EPC will be holding a live webinar exploring an issue that is likely to dominate discussions for some time: the world of microcredentials, short courses and sub-degree courses. How will this affect engineering education and are universities ready to embrace the changes that the Lifelong Learning Entitlement will bring? We will have a panel of leading experts who are already at the forefront of delivery to help you understand what you need to know. Further details on this event and how to book will be circulated soon.

EPC EVENT: Congress 2022: A Better World, 7th to 9th June 2022, UWE Bristol

Our flagship event of the year – the EPC Annual Congress – will be a face-to-face event in June. This 3-day event will pick up on our two-year theme: A Better World, which will focus on ethics, sustainability and recovery. It will be held at UWE, Bristol, from 7th to 9th June 2022 and is not to be missed.

We can announce that **Dame Judith Hackitt**, Chair of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, will be giving the Congress public lecture. See more details below. Other high-profile speakers and leading experts will also be speaking throughout congress, including **Dame Ottoline Leyser**, CEO of UKRI; **Dr Hyaatun Sillem CBE**, Chief Exec. of the Royal Academy of Engineering; and **Prof. Steve West CBE**, President of Universities UK. **Simon Fanshawe OBE** will also be present to discuss his book *The Power of Difference* in which he explores how greater diversity and inclusion achieves better results (more information about his book is available [here](#)).

The Congress dinner will be served aboard the icon of engineering that is Brunel's SS Great Britain and you will have the opportunity to tour and see live demonstrations in the cutting-edge Bristol Robotics Laboratory and UWE's new curriculum-led Engineering Block. Visit the [EPC website](#) for the full line-up of activities, which is being updated all the time!

Bookings via the [UWE store](#) are open with substantially discounted early bird tickets only on sale for limited time - so be sure to secure your place soon. If you're looking for somewhere to stay in Bristol, please see the [EPC website](#).

EPC EVENT: Congress public lecture, 7th June 2022

We are delighted to announce that **Dame Judith Hackitt DBE, FREng, FIChemE, FCGI** (Chair of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety - following Grenfell) will be the speaker for our Congress public lecture entitled “Engineering a better world: Lessons from events like Grenfell on delivering outcomes that benefit society”. Alongside those who book Congress tickets this lecture is open to the public – so be sure not to miss out on what will be an engaging and informative hour for all. This lecture will take place in person at Bristol Business School, UWE, beginning at 18:30 on the Tuesday 7th June. For those who cannot attend this lecture, the event will be recorded and made available on the EPC website after the event. Booking is now open on Eventbrite [here](#) – be sure to book your place soon, as spaces are limited.

In the news

PLANS FOR A POST-QUALIFICATIONS ADMISSIONS SYSTEM SCRAPPED

Towards the end of February, Michelle Donelan (Minister of State for Higher and Further Education) announced that the Government would not be pursuing a post-qualifications admissions system at the current time. A post-qualifications admissions system would have seen a radical shift from the current university admissions processes to a system in which offers would be given to students based on their actual exam results not predicted grades. This follows the government’s [consultation](#) on this system last May – you can read the EPC’s full response [here](#). Dropping the plans for a PQA system is in line with the EPC’s position.

R&D FUNDS CONFIRMED

On the 14th March, the Department for Business, Energy, and the Industrial Strategy confirmed the £39.8 billion R&D budget for 2022-2025 – to help deliver the government's Innovation Strategy, and drive forward ambitions as a science superpower. This represents one step towards the departments target to invest 2.4% of GDP in R&D by 2027. The investment is to contribute to the new cross-government approach on research and development and will support priorities key to the UK’s prosperity– listed as; climate change, levelling up opportunities, clean tech and AI. A large proportion of the budget has been allocated to UKRI, who will receive over £25 billion across the next 3 years. Additionally, the UK’s Space Agency will also see its budget increase to over £600 million by 2024-25. However, ARAI will only receive £475 million over three years – which is particularly low compared to the £800 million that had been promised in the 2020 spending review. The press release states that this new R&D funding allocation follows the Levelling Up White Paper commitments – particularly regarding investment in R&D outside of the South East. Read the full press release [here](#).

The Russell Group’s response states they [“look forward to playing a central role in turning this investment into new knowledge, ideas and talent”](#) clearly welcoming this new budget proposal, in particular welcoming the confirmation that funding required for Horizon Europe will not come out of the main UKRI allocation. The National Centre for Universities and Business have also welcomed this new budget – with Rosalind Lowe (Head of Policy and Engagement) suggesting that [“The Government has today shown its commitment to a vision of a better future driven by research and innovation”](#).

BRITISH COMPUTING SOCIETY: Review of UK compulsory level computing qualifications

The British Computing Society (BCS) has published a landscape review of computing and digital qualifications in the UK. This report compiles data on participation and achievement in academic and vocational/technical computing and digital skills qualifications for learners aged 16-18 across the UK. The report explores the different approaches across the UK education systems to understand underlying goals and whether each are achieving their aims. Notably, the report has found that participation is low in vocationally oriented pathways, but that computing is among the six top subjects for first year undergraduates and that enrolment exceeds the number of students starting higher education with computing qualifications. The BCS suggest this report will provide a comprehensive evidence base to help when refining existing approaches and/or developing new ones. Find out more about this report [here](#).

Consultations

AUGAR RESPONSE

On the 24th February - the government announced its response to the 2019 Augar Review. Part two of the response is seeking views on proposals to supplement the changes to HE funding and finance, including incentivising high-quality provision by considering proportionate student number controls (SNCs) and exploring low level minimum eligibility requirements (MERs) to access HE student finance. A separate consultation will focus on the government's proposals to introduce the promised Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE). Read the government's [full response](#) for more details and access the consultation [here](#). The deadline for responses is **6th May 2022**. The EPC is currently putting together a response on behalf of engineering academics and will be consulting with members soon - look out for details following shortly on how to have your say.

JISC: Design of the UK's future research assessment system

As part of the [Future Research Assessment Programme \(FRAP\)](#), Jisc are seeking views on behalf of the four funding bodies (Research England, Scottish Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland) on the design of the UK's future research assessment system. Every few years – the research assessment system (currently REF) is reviewed before a new exercise round begins, and this consultation is asking specifically for views on the purposes of a future exercise; principles that should guide its development; and assessment criteria and processes. See more information on this consultation [here](#). The deadline for responses is the **6th May 2022**, and the EPC's RIKT committee is currently preparing a representative response.

Opportunities

EPC VACANCIES: Join the EPC team!

We currently have two highly flexible remote-working vacancies available at the EPC. The first is an [Administration and Membership Manager](#) – who will be picking up from Vicky – overseeing membership services, such as subscriptions, contacts and payments; helping to organise online and in person events; organising meetings, taking minutes and providing executive services to the Chief Executive. The second is an [Editorial and Admin Assistant](#) who will be helping to migrate existing content over to our new website; creating new content; ensuring our website is up-to-date and easily navigable; assisting in efforts to engage our members in our programme of events; and helping keep our membership database updated. The deadline for Administration and Membership Manager applications is the **19th April 2022** and the Editorial and Administration Assistant application deadline is **no later than Monday 4th April**. See more information on these two positions, and how to apply on the [EPC website](#).

RAEng VISITING PROFESSOR SCHEME: Applications now open

RAEng's Visiting Professor Scheme is now open for applications – this is an industry-into-academia initiative which aims to utilise the experience of Visiting Professors (including industrialists, entrepreneurs, consultants and innovators) to enhance teaching, learning, employability and skills of UK engineering students. The Visiting Professors will participate in curriculum development, teaching / mentoring of undergraduates, or the development of innovative approaches such as flipped-classroom, problem-based learning and team working in engineering teaching and learning. Following successful application by the host university the award supports the Visiting Professor's attendance at the host university for a minimum of 12 days annually, to a maximum of £10,000 per year for three years. RAEng is especially encouraging nominations / nominees from women and other groups (e.g. post-92 universities) that are currently under-represented in the scheme. Applications close on **31st March at 4pm**. More information can be found on the [RAEng website](#).

RAEng INCLUSIVE CULTURES RESEARCH: Engineers needed for focus groups and interviews

RAEng have commissioned DJS Research to undertake a quantitative and qualitative research study into the current culture of inclusivity in engineering, which will build upon and update on RAEng's 2017 review "[Creating cultures where all engineers thrive](#)". RAEng are looking for engineers and those working on engineering projects across all industries to take part in this new research study, through participating in both focus groups and in-depth interviews. Feedback gained from this will be part of the wider report and participants can choose whether they wish to be directly attributed to the comments or if they prefer to remain anonymous. As a thank you for participation, you will receive a £40 online GiftPay voucher, or a donation of the same amount to a charity. You can register your interest in becoming a participant [here](#).



Follow us on twitter [@EngProfCouncil](#)

And join our LinkedIn community [Engineering Academics' Network | Groups | LinkedIn](#)



Engineering Professors' Council Registered Office: Brooks Green House, Brooks Green Horsham West Sussex RH13 0JN Company Registration Number 06791295
Patrons: Professor Dame Ann Dowling OM DBE FREng FRS Professor Lord Alec Broers FREng FRS Kt DL Professor Julia King, the Baroness Brown of Cambridge DBE FREng Sir John Parker GBE FREng Sir William Wakeham FREng Sir Peter Williams CBE FRS FREng