



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

We are delighted to announce that the EPC Crucible Project Toolkit is now live on our website to help members unlock the secrets of successful academic-industry collaborations. The toolkit contains a huge variety of case studies showcasing innovative collaborations from a wide range of HE institutions and industry partners. We envision this toolkit as a growing resource into which we will continue to add case studies and other resources to help you build better industry links. More details below...

We are also excited to share more details on our Engineering Ethics campaign – tickets are now available to join a panel discussion on the ethics scholarship and pedagogy behind the EPC’s Engineering Ethics Toolkit which we launched online in February. In other event news - we can also announce that the **Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP**, former Universities & Science Minister, will be giving a keynote lecture on the 8th June at EPC Congress 2022, *A Better World*. We now have a fantastic line up of Congress speakers, panel discussions and networking activities – this three-day flagship event is not to be missed! More details below...

In wider news, OfS has published their Strategy for 2022-25, with very few significant changes since consultation, however the language used has been adjusted, and information on working with other regulatory organisations such as PEIs has been clarified – these were two points raised by the EPC in our consultation response. Elsewhere, it has been announced that “significantly less than half” of level 3 qualifications are expected to be defunded – a climbdown from when the Skills and post-16 Education bill started its journey. And although we heard last month that the Government has scrapped plans to move to a post-qualification admissions system, UCAS is now looking to ditch personal statements in favour of a series of structured questions to help balance out inequality in the university applications system. More below....

EPC news

CRUCIBLE PROJECT TOOLKIT: now available on the EPC website

We are delighted to announce that EPC’s landmark Crucible Project, supporting university and industry collaboration in engineering, is now live as a [toolkit](#) on the EPC website! This project has been a major initiative for the EPC over the past year, so we are very happy to announce that after a [very successful launch webinar](#) earlier this year – the case studies presented at the event *and more* are [now live on the EPC website](#) as a member's-only resource. This toolkit showcases a fantastic range of case studies outlining innovative and engaging collaborations between academics and industry. Access to the individual case studies is an exclusive EPC member benefit so do get in

touch if you have forgotten your password. We would like to thank the EPC's RIKT committee for their enthusiasm and hard work on developing this project, but also thanks to all of those who have contributed a case study to make this an extensive, and what we hope will be a very useful, resource. This is just the beginning – we envision this toolkit as a living and growing resource to help you find research funding, place graduates in employment, create work-based learning opportunities and so on. Members will soon be able to contribute their own, or further case studies to ensure that this resource continually grows. Explore the case studies available in the [Crucible Project Toolkit](#) today and let us know how you get on!

GUEST BLOG: why communication is a critical tool for any engineer

Prof Lucy Rogers PhD CEng FEng FIMechE, [@DrLucyRogers](#), an independent innovation consultant and RAEng Visiting Professor at Brunel University, London has produced a blog for the EPC website explaining why communication skills are a vital part of the toolkit for being successful in engineering. Drawing on her own thoughts on what made her choose engineering and experiences as a young graduate – Prof Rogers explores just how important good communication skills are when working as an engineer, and what these skills actually consist of. Find out more about this in her blog [here](#). Prof Rogers has also distilled her communications knowledge into online courses that she is licensing to universities to assist with the new AHEP4 rules – see more details [here](#).

Upcoming events

EPC ONLINE EVENT: Introducing the Engineering Ethics Toolkit, 5th May 2022 10:00-11:30

The EPC will be holding an online event at 10am on the 5th May 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. Booking is now open – register on Eventbrite [here](#).

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 conference 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; **The Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP**, former Universities & Science Minister; **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 tickets for EPC members and early career staff. If you're looking for somewhere to stay in Bristol, please see the [EPC website](#).

EPC EVENT: Congress public lecture, 7th June 2022

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 for the public lecture is now open on Eventbrite [here](#) – be sure to book your place soon, as spaces are limited. Access to the public lecture is already included in Congress tickets – so if you are interested in attending this talk and getting involved with a variety of exciting networking, panel discussions and other keynote lectures, book Congress tickets [today!](#)

EPC EVENT: Annual General Meeting:

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 9th June from 09:15-10:00 in Lecture Theatre 2X112, Bristol Business School, UWE Bristol, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QY as part of the EPC Annual Congress. You don't need to be booked as a delegate for Congress to attend the AGM (but there's a great line-up of speaker and activities, so why not?). Each Institutional Member (i.e. a university or department that subscribes to the EPC) is entitled to nominate up to three Council Members who are entitled to vote at the AGM. All individual EPC members and one senior representative per each EPC partner organisations are welcome to attend as observers. Further details including the formal notice for the AGM will be made available on the EPC website soon, emails will be sent out in the next few weeks to let you know when. The AGM will be considering who should be the next EPC Vice President, President Elect and potential hosts for the 2024 EPC Congress. See more information on this in the opportunities section below.

In the news

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: Office for Students Strategy for 2022-25

The OfS consulted on the Office for Students' strategy for the period 2022-25 from November 2021-January 2022 (read the EPC's full response [here](#)), and have now published the outcomes.

Unfortunately – the OfS strategy hasn't changed greatly, showing very few significant shifts from the original draft – however one of the key changes to the final version was the language the strategy used. In the final version, a lot of the tone and language that "[indicated a lack of trust in the sector](#)" has been changed – one of the points explicitly asked for by the EPC. Additionally, they have also addressed how they will work with other organisations, particularly those responsible for, or associated with quality assessment of registered providers – changing the language to recognise the importance of focussing on engagement and collaboration with other regulatory bodies such as PEIs – another point raised by the EPC. See more details and read the full outcomes [here](#).

BTEC DEFUNDING

The [Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#) has completed its journey through parliament subsequent to the withdrawal of Lord Blunkett's amendment which would have meant a three-year delay in the

defunding of level 3 qualifications. Representing a change from the beginning of this bill's move through parliament – qualifications including BTECs, that overlap with T-levels introduced in 2020/21 will be funded until 2024-25, and those overlapping with T-levels introduced in 2021/22 will be funded until 2025/26. Dispelling expectations that only a very small number of these qualifications would be retained, it instead looks like ministers expect to only defund a small proportion of level 3 BTECs. Baroness Barran guaranteed that employers will be involved/consulted on the overlap consideration process – where existing level 3 qualifications already meet industry needs and that “[significantly less than half](#)” of Level 3 qualifications are expected have public funding approval removed. Read the full debate [here](#).

In response to the controversial Level 3 qualification reforms, HEPI have also recently published a [new paper](#) comprised of a collection of chapters written by 11 authors – including Johnny Rich in his capacity as the EPC's CEO. Collectively – the chapters suggest that England risks closing off an important route for students, including those who are aiming to reach HE. It is also argued that the new T Levels still have yet to prove themselves and that their success should not be dependent on shutting off existing tried-and-tested options such as BTECs. Access Johnny's chapter and the full report [here](#).

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION: schools white paper

The Department for Education published [Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child](#). – This white paper is to demonstrate how our education system can deliver on the Government's levelling up priorities. The paper contains multiple policy proposals that have implications for higher education and engineering, for example – a new Initial Teacher Training course to help support engineers teach physics at secondary school level – as part of their proposal to “attract the best teachers where they are needed most”. Additionally, the report suggests they “will work with universities to deliver better targeted support” – by driving greater social mobility in HE and strengthening the engagement between schools and HE providers. Access more details and the full report [here](#).

REGIONAL ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY: implications for Levelling-up

The Royal Society has published a new report [Regional absorptive capacity: the skills dimension](#), which explored where in the UK skills linked to innovation were included in job adverts. Absorptive capacity refers to the “[ability of people to understand and apply new ideas and approaches](#)”. The report findings suggest that London, South East and North West based organisations are better able to absorb new skills, with the highest numbers of absorptive capacity jobs – highlighting a localised skills challenge for Levelling up. Wealthier areas appear to have more capacity to absorb innovation in skills, and clusters of jobs associated with absorptive capacity were also identified including mechanical product design, software quality, industrial science, control engineering, aerospace data science and data science – for which analysis indicated high levels of unmet demand. Based on these findings, the Royal Society have put forward several recommendations including greater alignment of research and local industry in R&D, local training provision for intermediate technical skills, providing incentives and local opportunities with industry to address the shortage of STEM teachers, and improving the availability of data on sectoral demand for skills. The Royal Society also re-iterate that skills do not provide a complete solution to regional inequality and that to increase skills demand action is required in other areas including healthcare, housing, environment and transport policy. Read the full report [here](#) and/or an article summarising the report and its implications for both Levelling up and education [here](#).

SAY GOODBYE TO PERSONAL STATEMENTS?

UCAS are looking into ditching free form personal statements in favour of a more structured approach using a series of questions. This represents an attempt to level the playing field between university applicants with Michelle Donelan suggesting that [“personal statements in their current form favour the most advantaged students”](#). In the current system students are required to complete a 4000-character statement to “sell” themselves to their chosen universities. The suggested reform of this system follows concerns that personal statements favour middle class students as they often receive significant support from teachers and parents when writing their statements. The new system would present applicants with a series of questions – offering greater guidance – to [“help students from all backgrounds have an equal level of support”](#), in the words of Clare Marchant, Chief Exec of UCAS.

HORIZON EUROPE: still no agreement

The UK has still not been formally associated with Horizon Europe funding.. Currently – UK researchers are eligible to apply for Horizon Europe funding – but they cannot sign any grant agreements or receive funding. However, despite uncertainties caused by Brexit, UK institutions remain applicants’ preferred destination for researchers, demonstrating the attractiveness of the UK HE system. But with the UK’s association still up in the air with Horizon, successful applicants are uncertain if they will receive funding from the European commission or the UK government. Marco Cavallaro (PhD student at the University of Lugano, Switzerland) in a [guest blog for HEPI](#) asks, “how many more years do we want to interfere with the free flow of researchers and knowledge across the continent and prevent European research from unleashing its full potential?”.

A DECADE OF SUCCESS: celebrating CaSE’s achievements

CaSE, a leading independent advocate for science and engineering in the UK, have recently launched a campaign celebrating their achievements over the last decade. They have published four case studies showcasing CaSE’s vital role and organisational strength in standing up successfully for science and engineering across the decade. The case studies explore CaSE’s key strengths and achievements including the importance of evidence to underpin what we want to say; being an impartial and trusted voice; working hard to develop good relations with policy and decision makers; and harnessing the media and bringing the entire sector together to speak with one voice. Find out more and access the case studies on the [CaSE website](#).

Consultations

AUGAR RESPONSE

In February the Government finally 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 focuses 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 preparing an Executive response in collaboration with the Board.

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 and drop-in sessions to answer any questions you may have on the consultation for the FRAP team [here](#). The deadline for responses is the **6th May 2022**, and the EPC’s RIKT committee is currently preparing a representative response.

LEVELLING UP

The much-anticipated “Levelling-up” white paper was published in February – setting out how the government is planning to tackle the issue of regional inequality in opportunity across the UK, through a mixture of new policies and previously announced ones. This paper presents a mission-oriented approach in which 12 missions are presented as targets to be achieved by 2030. Access the levelling up white paper [here](#) to see details on all 12 missions. Of particular importance to us are the missions relating to research and development. Universities are barely discussed in this paper, only referred to as anchor institutions and partners. There appears to be no central role for universities in this levelling-up proposal and no commitments outlined regarding access to HE as a means to levelling-up. Although there is no official consultation as such associated with this white paper - the EPC Board is nevertheless currently considering content of a representative EPC response and the form it should take.

Opportunities

STAND FOR ELECTION... as the EPC’s Vice President, President Elect.

You can stand for election as our new Vice President, President Elect, or as a member of the Board (on which four elected positions will become vacant). More details will be available on the EPC website soon and we will be sending out emails about how to stand for election over the next few weeks. Elections will be held at the AGM on 9th June 2022.

CONGRESS 2024: coming soon to your university?

We are inviting applications to host our Congress event in 2024. More details will be available soon on the EPC website and via email, about how you can grab the opportunity to showcase your department, university and town to the must-attend event for the UK's engineering academic community.

RAEng ENGINEERING ETHICS AUDIT: views of UK engineers and technicians needed

The RAEng are looking for engineers and technicians working in the UK to share their views in a new survey on engineering ethical practice to gain a more comprehensive view of the lived experience of ethics in engineering. The survey is part of the RAEng’s Engineering Ethics Audit – one of the actions which came out of the [RAEng/Engineering Council engineering ethics report](#) released earlier this year. This audit of current engineering ethical practice and cultures is one of the steps RAEng are taking to support ethical engineering leadership and behaviour across all parts of the engineering community. The survey is open to response until the **31st May** and is accessible [here](#).



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