

6. What is the problem on which we should hold an inquiry?

Please explain in no more than 150 words your idea for an inquiry for the APPG to run in 2019. For example, recruitment and retention of STEM specialist teachers.

Eliminating equality gaps in STEM education is critical. There are massive labour skills shortages, particularly in Engineering, with an average annual demand to fill 124,000 Level 3+ core engineering roles through to 2024. To support UK's Industrial Strategy and Britain's forthcoming exit from the EU, we need to urgently improve and secure UK engineering talent pipelines through ensuring we draw from the widest pool possible.

Engineering, in particular, tends to very actively focus on its gender problem; typically fewer than 1 in 5 higher education (HE) engineering enrolments are currently women. The national focus now needs to expand to eliminate gaps in the HE entry rates for the most and least represented groups, reducing the ratio for POLAR4 quintile 5: quintile 1 students. The HE demand gap in engineering is wider than in other subjects and proportionately the admissions gap is wider than the trend in demand indicates.

7. Who are the potential beneficiaries of policy change?

Individuals who are typically under-represented in Higher Education, engineering employers and the engineering sector, the UK economy.

What are the potential solutions?

We know much about the long-standing underrepresentation of women in the engineering sector being culturally deep rooted and now need to extend this understanding to low participation areas in order to facilitate change. The problem is complex and a "stick" approach is unlikely to return good yields. We need a better understanding of the complexities and a clear evidence base of successful approaches.

9. Who are the experts on this topic?

The Office for Students (widening participation) the Engineering Professors' Council, Engineering 4 Education, universities and colleges...

10. Is there current evidence about the problem?

There is extensive UCAS and HESA data which has not been duly explored by the sector in this area.

11. Who should be consulted?

See questions 9 and 10,

Who are the relevant ministers or Government departments?

Chris Skidmore, Department for Education