

EPC Congress 2012

The Congress will be held at the University of Leicester on 17th-18th April. There is still time to register at <http://shop.le.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?catid=44&modid=2&compid=1>

It will be opened by Professor Sir Robert Burgess, Vice Chancellor, University of Leicester, who will be speaking on "Developing Universities in a New Era". This will be followed by sessions reporting on the EPC study on engineering graduate unemployment, by Professor Helen Atkinson FEng, EPC President, and on various aspects of current HE reforms, with senior figures from organizations including UCAS, UUK, HEFCE, QAA and EPSRC. We want to make sure attendees get an opportunity to 'see where things are going', such as, for example, Key Information Sets (KIS); this is a significant issue coming up where there are particular issues connected with the size of our cohorts in engineering, which may influence how our data appears. Also, Chris Millward, from HEFCE, will speak about Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects (SIVS) and where HEFCE is going with this. The second day will begin with a concentrated session on the REF with speakers from three of the engineering panels, followed by a presentation on the Global Dimension in Engineering Education (GDEE) Project, in which the EPC has been involved; the formal part of the Congress will conclude with a session with a speaker from Engineers Without Borders.

A Distinguished Guest Lecture will be given on the evening of 17th April by Professor Julia King CBE FEng, Vice Chancellor of Aston University, on 'Climate Change, Green Growth, Opportunities for Engineering and Manufacturing'. Professor King will be receiving the EPC President's Prize for Engineering Education at the subsequent Congress Dinner at the Belmont Hotel.

For full information, go to <http://www.epc.ac.uk/current/diary/story.php?id=182>.

EPC AGM 2012

The AGM, for members from subscribing universities only, will be held at the end of the first afternoon of the Congress. Two positions on the Committee are vacant; details have been circulated to all EPC members but, if you have not received them, please email V.Elston@epc.ac.uk.

Consultations

The EPC is preparing a response to HEFCE's consultation on Student number controls and teaching funding, including SIVS funding. We would welcome your views – contact PBaker@epc.ac.uk.

We have recently responded to the following consultations:

- HE Commission consultation on postgraduate education;
- Royal Society consultation on maths and science in schools;
- UCAS consultation on admissions proposals, including post-qualification applications;
- House of Lords Inquiry on higher education in STEM subjects;
- House of Lords Inquiry on modernisation of higher education in Europe.

For details of EPC responses, go to <http://www.epc.ac.uk/publications/consultation/index.php> or contact PBaker@epc.ac.uk.

Recent appointments

Recent new appointments of EPC Committee members include

- Professor Barry Clarke, EPC's Immediate Past President and Professor of Civil Engineering Geotechnics at the University of Leeds, has been elected the next President of the Institution of Civil Engineers;
- Professor Jim Yip, EPC Treasurer, has moved to Salford University as Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation and Dean of the College of Science & Technology;
- recent Committee member Professor Alistair Sambell is moving to Edinburgh Napier University as Deputy Vice Chancellor;
- recent Committee member Professor Jonathan Cooper has taken up the Airbus Sir George White Chair, a joint Bristol University and Airbus position.

Leaving...

Fiona Martland retires after the Congress after 10 years as EPC Director. We thank her for all she has done for the EPC and wish her well in her retirement. Her successor will be announced shortly.

"Mind the Gap"

Professor Fred Maillardet writes:

This Institute of Physics study focused on the preparation for both physics and engineering courses and included interviews with engineering academics and students. The results are thus directly relevant to the EPC.

Most of the findings and conclusions confirm the views that EPC have formed over recent years, but there are some surprises. For example, the finding that algebra was found to be 'relatively easy' by students and that academics shared this view (see para. 1.1.2 of the Executive Summary) is contrary to EPC experience, given that we have consistently found that rearranging the subject of an algebraic equation is a serious challenge to many engineering students.

The Executive Summary and full report may be found at http://www.iop.org/publications/iop/2011/file_51933.pdf.

EC Professional Qualifications Directive

The European Commission's latest draft of the Professional Qualifications Directive contains a threat relating to the length of UK degrees. We are working with the Engineering Council and others to ensure the offending wording is changed in the final text. Katy Turff, Head of International at the Engineering Council, writes

Following extensive consultation, the European Commission published its proposals for modernisation of the directive (2005/36/EC) in December 2011. This sets out a progressive approach to modernisation which the Engineering Council has welcomed along with many positive aspects of the proposal.

The Engineering Council has expressed concern about proposed changes to Article 11, which sets out levels of qualification and Article 13 on conditions for recognition. Currently, individuals holding an integrated Masters degree, such as the MEng, or a combination of a Bachelors + one-year Masters meet the description for level (e) of Article 11, which is the highest level. The proposals seek to change this description from "of at least four years duration" to "of more than four years duration". Bachelors degrees remain at level (d). This could have an impact on how individuals are recognised in future.

The Engineering Council is working with BIS and the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee to resolve this matter. If your university has responded about this

or you would like further information, please contact Katy Turff, Head of International at the Engineering Council kturff@engc.org.uk

www.epc.ac.uk

Engineering Professors' Council - Promoting Excellence in Higher Education