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WELCOME

Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent readers' questionnaire, which generated over 500 responses. The survey prompted many of you to provide ideas for content, which we'll endeavour to address in future issues. An outline of the survey results, which are overall very positive, can be found below. And congratulations to Tony Knight of QinetiQ who is the lucky winner of the £25 Waterstones voucher.

News on recent developments in engineer and technician registration includes the exciting announcement for BEng graduates working towards CEng, that many Honours degrees are now also recognised as meeting the full academic requirements for IEng.

From outside the UK we are pleased to report on evidence of the convergence of degree requirements around the world, a positive outcome of the International Engineering Alliance meeting in Kyoto.

Register News also contains news and views on more general issues that are likely to be of interest to registrants, educators and institution staff.

Finally, please remember that we are always interested in feedback, to ensure that we are providing you with the information that best meets your needs.

Andrew Ramsay CEng

CEO, Engineering Council UK

REGISTER NEWS READERS' SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you again to everyone who responded to our questionnaire, the results of which are below:

Although the vast majority of you normally read Register News online, a substantial number also like the print and read option, so we will continue to offer the two current (web and printable) formats.

Comments about the current design and layout of Register News were very positive. As we are currently busy updating the EC^{UK} website in terms of content, navigation and design, the newsletter will only undergo a minimal change in appearance to remain consistent with EC^{UK} branding.

43% of you claim to frequently read the entire content, however a larger percentage are more inclined to concentrate on selected articles. 85% told us that you find the newsletter easy to navigate with items of interest easily located in the current format.

Bearing in mind that just over half of you would like to receive the newsletter on a monthly basis, while the other half are happy for it to be issued every two to three months, we will endeavour to issue Register News at least every two months.

94% thought Register News was about the right length, with 76% preferring to keep the same amount of content rather than having to click on a link to read further. 82% felt that the addition of photographs added value.

With regard to further information, your numerous and varied suggestions have provided us with some valuable ideas for topics to cover in future articles. Other information requests could be incorporated into the new EC^{UK} website. Unfortunately time and resource don't permit us to respond to each suggestion individually, however several common themes appeared, including requests for more information on:

- international news (reflecting the high number of readers based outside the UK)
- individual categories of registration and the registration process

- the Professional Engineering Institutions, including comparisons and news regarding the possibility of consolidation
- ECUK and its various activities
- education

We had several requests for more specific information on particular engineering disciplines, however as Register News aims to cater for the engineering profession in general, this is probably best left to the institute journals who all do a very good job providing information specifically for their members.

DUAL ACCREDITATION FOR IEng AND CEng

During its recent meeting the Registration Standards Committee agreed that all Honours degrees accredited as partially meeting the academic requirements for CEng should be regarded as accredited degrees for IEng registration. This change is to be backdated to cover all such degrees accredited since 1999 and the ECUK accredited courses database will shortly be changed accordingly.

The change reflects the progressive registration structure introduced following the IEng review, and offers graduates with these degrees the possibility of IEng registration while maintaining the opportunity to become CEng later if their careers develop appropriately. It also brings them within the scope of the Sydney Accord mutual recognition arrangements.

For further information please contact Richard Shearman, rshearman@engc.org.uk.

ECUK ACCREDITATION CONFERENCE

On 14 October ECUK is hosting a conference, **Accreditation of engineering degree programmes – current requirements and future challenges**, at the IMarEST headquarters in London.

The outcomes-based system of accreditation introduced by UK-SPEC has been welcomed by academia and the engineering profession's process has been commended by the HE Regulatory Review Group as an exemplar of practice. It encourages different approaches by universities and a variety of provision and delivery methods are emerging, stimulated also by such factors as the changing HE landscape, demographic trends, employer pressure, and government policy.

The conference will therefore explore the challenges to current accreditation processes and practices posed by new types of provision. It will include an international perspective and look at how another profession goes about accreditation, as well as consider how professional body accreditation activity relates to more general quality assurance processes in HE.

Delegates will look strategically at:

- the aims of professional accreditation of engineering degrees
- the value of accreditation to the various stakeholders
- the future challenges for accreditation and how to ensure that the process remains fit for purpose.

The conference will be of interest to:

- Engineering academics and those involved in quality assurance aspects of engineering degrees
- Engineering professional bodies, both staff and volunteer members involved in accreditation visits and committees making decisions on accreditation
- Sector Skills Councils for engineering-related industries
- Employers of engineering graduates

For further details please contact Neela Lubojacky on nlubojacky@engc.org.uk

SEFI ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

Addressing the global concern over decreasing numbers of students in technology, the theme 'Attracting Young People to Engineering' was adopted for the 37th annual conference hosted by SEFI – the European Society for Engineering Education. The conference, held at the World Trade Centre in Rotterdam in early July, was attended by more than 320 experts from universities and industry from across the world, including ECUK representatives Richard Shearman, Director of Formation/Deputy CEO and Deborah Seddon, Deputy Director of Formation at ECUK.

The ECUK representatives were delighted that their paper, entitled 'Challenges for academic accreditation: a UK perspective', was selected by a special Awards Committee as one of the 12 best papers out of 157 submissions. The paper reviews current changes in higher education such as the growth of part-time study and distance learning, and employer involvement in the design and delivery of courses, and examines how the engineering profession's accreditation processes might have to adapt to take account of these.

Information on the SEFI conference can be found on: www.sefi.be/?p=685.

For further details or a copy of the paper please contact rshearman@engc.org.uk

ART MEETS SCIENCE TO WIN TEACHING AWARDS 2009

It appears that today's engineering students enjoy elements of the arts as well as science during lectures. At least this is the case at the University of Nottingham, where Mechanical Engineering tutor Mike Clifford's use of story-telling, drama, costume, poetry, music and performance art during his Professional Studies lectures is proving popular with his students.



His novel approach also impressed the judges of The Higher Education Academy's Engineering Subject Centre's Teaching Awards who awarded him overall winner for 2009. At a recent awards ceremony Mike was presented with a certificate and a cheque for £500 towards future conference expenses by ECUK's Deputy Director of Formation, Deborah Seddon.

Sponsored by ECUK for the past five years, the Engineering Subject Centre Teaching Awards provide an opportunity for engineering academics to receive national recognition for their outstanding learning and teaching practices. The Engineering Subject Centre is keen to identify engineering academics who are using teaching methodologies that have been proven to enhance the student learning experience.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.engsc.ac.uk/an/TeachingAwards2009.asp>

WORK-BASED MSc PROVIDES NEW PATHWAY TO CEng

Aston University is looking forward to welcoming its first intake to a work-based MSc Professional Engineering in October. Opening up a new pathway to Chartered Engineer (CEng) status, the programme will provide the advanced engineering knowledge and understanding, and assist with developing the standards of competence required for CEng.

Participants will be able to remain in full-time employment as formal study is carried out through distance learning, supported by Aston University staff and a workplace mentor. Several engineering disciplines are available, built around individually planned work-based learning through agreed workplace projects.

Successful completion of the MSc Professional Engineering and meeting the competence requirements, combined with membership of a licensed professional engineering institution (PEI), guarantees access to professional review for CEng registration. Nine PEIs – BCS, CIBSE, IChemE, IET, IPem, IMechE, InstMC, RAeS, SOE – have now formally ratified the Registration Protocol with ECUK. This confirms their support for individuals choosing this pathway and a willingness to consider the programmes for future accreditation.

Aston is the fifth university to offer the MSc in Professional Engineering, and joins Kingston University, Staffordshire University, University of Hertfordshire, and Northumbria University. Interest in the work-based route to professional qualification continues to grow and further programmes are likely to be available during 2009/2010 at six more academic institutions, with others considering development of provision.

Further information on the Aston University MSc can be found at www.aston.ac.uk/profeng.

Information on the development of the work-based pathway can be found at www.engineeringgateways.co.uk.

WORKBASED BSc TO BE LAUNCHED

A pathway for engineers seeking a bachelors level degree and aspiring to achieve Incorporated Engineer (IEng) status has been developed along similar lines to the MSc Professional Engineering. Amongst others, this is expected to be an attractive progression route for those with a Foundation Degree and there is already some interest amongst academic institutions in offering this degree. Further information is available at:

<http://www.engineeringgateways.co.uk/media/5178/090331iengguideforwebsite.pdf>

INCORPORATING GLOBAL ISSUES INTO ENGINEERING EDUCATION

Engineering education has to develop to keep pace with global issues such as sustainability, climate change and poverty. Forward-thinking higher education institutions (HEIs) are therefore considering how they can adapt courses to equip students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are necessary to maximise the positive and far-reaching impact of engineering on society and the environment.

ECUK is involved in a new three year project, due to be launched on 14 September, working with seven UK based HEIs to help them incorporate global issues into the teaching of engineering.

Funded by a grant from the Department for International Development, the project is being implemented by independent NGO Engineers Against Poverty (EAP) in association with ECUK, the Higher Education Academy's Engineering Subject Centre, Development Education Research Centre of the Institute of Education and the Engineering Professors' Council. The participating HEIs are University of Liverpool, Cardiff University, Queens University Belfast, University of Derby, University of Leeds, Northumbria University and University of Plymouth.

More information can be found on: www.engineersagainstopoverty.org.

BREAKTHROUGH ON INTERNATIONAL ALIGNMENT OF EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

The unique double trapezoid structure of the Kyoto International Conference Centre in Japan provided the venue for the 2009 meeting of the International Engineering Alliance (IEA). The expanding forum - over twenty countries were represented - had a powerful UK presence. ECUK provided the IEA Chairman (David Long) and George O'Neill is Deputy Chairman of one of the constituent Accords.

ECUK's delegation took an active part in the meeting and made sure that issues of concern to the UK were thoroughly debated. This ensured explicit guidance was agreed on how to conduct reviews of Accord member standards. ECUK again pressed for Accord members to meet their obligations to accept relevant qualifications.

With a foot in both camps ECUK also facilitated dialogue, which should lead to more formal cooperation, between global and European initiatives.

However, the most important outcome of the week's meetings was the adoption of revised graduate attributes for the Washington Accord. This will lead, after a transition period, to greater alignment with the master level qualifications required under UK-SPEC, and should help to address increasing concerns in the UK that the Washington Accord was obliging membership committees to accept overseas qualifications inferior to the UK-SPEC standard.

For further information please contact Jim Birch on jbirch@engc.org.uk



STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITIES: COMMITTEE ONLY HALF RIGHT

Although ECUK welcomes some of the recommendations made by the Select Committee for Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills in its 2nd August Report on Students and Universities, it has criticised the report's main thrust as unhelpful.

ECUK believes that the committee's statement that "the system in England for safeguarding consistent national standards in higher education institutions is out-of-date, inadequate and in urgent need of replacement" risks undermining the international reputation of UK Higher Education, and regrets that the committee did not recognise the fact that UK Higher Education in general meets the requirements of employers and graduates.

Engineering and technology degrees in particular are accredited by a rigorous system, which moreover is referenced against international as well as national standards. This, together with the work of the QAA, ensures that threshold standards are met. To do more than assure threshold standards is doomed to failure in an open and developing higher education system. Simplistic calls for national standards carry with them the risk of nationally determined syllabuses, denying the value of experimentation and innovation in course design. Implementation of the Higher Education Achievement Record, alongside the current degree classification system, is likely to provide more useful information and greater flexibility, than any attempt to establish national standards.

The proposal to strengthen the role of QAA is welcomed by ECUK. To some extent this is already happening, as the Committee notes. QAA has faced a difficult balancing act in navigating between Government demands to get more degrees per taxpayer pound, and universities' wishes to keep what they see as nose and bureaucratic inspectors at bay.

ECUK also welcomes the Committee's commitment to strategic funding of higher education, and in particular the pleasing emphasis on science technology engineering and mathematics (STEM). It shares the Committee's criticism of the Government's declared intention to encourage universities to create more places in these subjects without additional funding for tuition costs.

In addition, ECUK welcomes the Committee's plea for improvement in the treatment of part-time and mature students. Engineering has traditionally benefited from significant numbers of such students, who have often brought experience and insight unavailable to students straight from school. It agrees that the failure of the current system to treat them on the same basis as full-time students aged between 18 and 21 is wrong and that the forthcoming review of fees needs to examine all aspects of support for part-time and mature students.

Finally, ECUK notes the committee's reference to the role of the Higher Education Academy in raising and maintaining standards, and would wish to emphasise the important role carried out by the Academy's network of Subject Centres, and its belief that these should continue to be properly resourced to carry out their valuable work.

The full report can be found on: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmdius/170/170i.pdf>

FAIR ACCESS FINAL REPORT ISSUED

'Unleashing Aspiration', the final report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, was published on 21 July 2009. Chaired by Alan Milburn, the Panel looked at the processes and structures currently governing recruitment to the professions and focused on the actions that could be taken by them, supported by Government where necessary, to widen access and make entry procedures more flexible. The report was critical of implicit barriers to entry to the professions, although engineering's open access progressive structure was mentioned favourably.

ECUK had submitted evidence to assist the Panel in its research, and the engineering profession was represented on the Panel by Lord Browne, President of the Royal Academy of Engineering. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) will be responsible for coordinating the Government response, but early indications are that the Report is being taken very seriously by Government Ministers and will influence HE and other public policy.

To read the report please click on:

http://www.dius.gov.uk/higher_education/widening_participation/access_to_the_professions/panel_on_fair_access_to_the_professions

SELECT COMMITTEE REJECTS GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ON CHIEF ENGINEERS

The Select Committee for Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills published *Putting Science and Engineering at the Heart of Government Policy* in July. The Report revisits recommendations made in the Committee's earlier engineering report, *Engineering: turning ideas into reality*. They expressed disappointment that the Government would not be calling departmental engineering advisers 'Chief Engineering Advisers', nor would it move the Government Chief Scientific Adviser and his Government Office for Science into the heart of Government, the Cabinet Office. They rejected, as "making no sense" the arguments deployed by the Government in defence of its wish to retain the status quo.

The full Report is at <http://tinyurl.com/SELREP6> – recommendations 2 and 19 refer (pages 65 and 67).

THE IMPORTANCE OF APPRENTICESHIPS

To mark the official launch of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), new research has been published which highlights the importance of apprenticeships to individuals, businesses and the economy.

The majority of the apprentices surveyed (94%) believed that taking an apprenticeship had provided a number of benefits including better job prospects, higher salaries, improved confidence, better social skills and a stronger sense of direction. More than 76% believed that without their apprenticeship they would not be earning as much as their current salary.

91% of apprentices who completed their course believed it had significantly benefited their career and life options. Nearly the same proportion (89%) found employment immediately after their apprenticeship; very often through the employer they completed their apprenticeship with.

The research, representing findings from a survey of 3,808 apprentices, was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council and carried out by BMG through January 2009.

The full survey can be seen on: http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/294468_-_Benefits_of_completing_an_apprenticeship.pdf

CUTTING CARBON

Following the success of its 2009 Low Carbon Performance Awards, CIBSE is now looking to increase the range of entries and projects for next year. Recognising and rewarding proven achievements in delivering carbon savings in buildings, the Awards categories have been opened to the whole industry for 2010, and include 'New Build of the Year', 'Refurbishment of the Year' and 'Client of the Year'. Deadline for entries is 30th October 2009.

In addition, there are also three Awards categories only open to participants of the '100 Hours of Carbon Clean up Campaign'. Launching in September, the campaign is open to organisations from all sectors who want to reduce the amount of carbon emitted from their buildings and to motivate employees to get involved. In return for their time, participants are able to access an extensive list of carbon saving activities and expert advice.

This is the fourth Carbon Clean up Campaign run by CIBSE – last year's campaign saw around 600 organisations sign up to cut carbon, including hospitals, museums, consultancies, local authorities and universities.

For more information and to sign-up to the 2009 Carbon Clean up campaign please visit www.100hours.co.uk

For more information on the Low Carbon Performance Awards please visit <http://www.cibse.org/awards2010>

CBI REPORTS GOOD NEWS FOR ENGINEERING GRADUATES

A recent CBI Education and Skills Survey 2009 - Emerging stronger: the value of education and skills in turbulent times – provides interesting reading and contains some good news for the profession. Two extracts are included below:

On page 20 of the survey it is stated that: 'Professional qualifications – such as those in accountancy or engineering – often bring significant benefits and strong industry standing. Research (Source: An economic impact assessment of the CCPMO, prepared by London Economics, December 2008) shows that holding professional qualifications can add an additional £81,000 to lifetime earnings – compared to average lifetime earnings of £368,000 for someone with no qualifications.'

Further positive statements, found on page 27 under the heading 'STEM graduates receive among the highest starting salaries of all new recruits' state: 'The evidence from our survey – in which more than 350 employers provided detailed information about the salaries that they offer to graduate employees in different job types – makes clear that graduates in STEM disciplines can expect to be paid significantly more than average. Graduate jobs in science pay £1,000 more than the average graduate starting salary, and the average salary for jobs in engineering is £1,500 more. STEM graduates can also expect this early experience of their 'value-added' skill set to be sustained throughout their careers: recent studies by the 1994 group of universities and PwC reveal that science and technology graduates can expect a significantly higher earnings premium over the course of their working lives than graduates in disciplines such as social sciences or humanities. (Source: Graduate employment and earnings: Are universities meeting student expectations?, 1994 group, November 2008, and The economic benefits of higher education qualifications – a report produced for the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Institute of Physics, and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP January 2005).'

This goes on to say: 'The starting salary of engineers is among the highest – only managerial jobs pay more.'

The full report can be found on: <http://www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/20090406-cbi-education-and-skills-survey-2009.pdf>

BACKING WINNERS: THE CHANGING FACE OF MANUFACTURING

A briefing paper was issued by The ETB last month that highlights the challenges, strengths and changing face of UK manufacturing within a global technological based environment.

'Backing Winners: The Changing Face of Manufacturing' explores the changing face of manufacturing, using as a template the Government's Ministerial Advisory Group's five major manufacturing 'dynamics'. It assesses: how the UK is shaping up in relation to each of these trends; how well placed it is to capitalise on them; and the interventions that the Government has initiated in support.

The ETB's analysis clearly shows that the view of manufacturing as pure production is a myth and that the sector has huge opportunities to take advantage of growth in new technologies while incorporating higher value activities such as design, branding, customisation and service policies into its processes. The paper concludes with several key recommendations spanning technology opportunities, government procurement, design and intangible services, resource efficiencies and encouraging innovation. These are seen as capturing the key characteristics required for a new manufacturing concept.

The paper is available at http://www.etechnology.co.uk/policy/briefing_papers.cfm. Please email comments to research@etechnology.co.uk

EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY

A special Eurobarometer survey on European employment and social policy shows that an individual's level of professional experience and qualifications are key to employment. The report examines EU employment and social policy in the context of the economic downturn, with one section of the report looking specifically at the importance of qualifications. It concludes that more countries are placing increased emphasis on professional experience over the level of qualification, while other factors such as ability to adapt and computer skills are being deemed increasingly important. Language skills are seen as less important than in the past.

The survey was requested and coordinated by the Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and coordinated by Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Political Analysis" Unit) and can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_316_sum_en.pdf

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