

## **Engineering Gateways Flexible Pathways to becoming a Professional Engineer**

### **Stakeholders' Group meeting, 29 October 2009**

#### **Meeting notes**

This was the first meeting of the Stakeholders' Group. It was chaired by Wendy Laynton, Chair of the Engineering Gateways Steering Committee. There were twenty seven attendees, including most of the Steering Committee members. The programme (Annex 1) and list of attendees (Annex 2) are included at the end of these notes. Some of the presentations are available on the Engineering Gateways website.

#### **Chair's introduction**

It was explained that the Stakeholders' Group has been established to:

- provide a forum for the sharing of practice
- enable those newer to the Engineering Gateways pathway to benefit from the experience of others with more developed programmes
- provide a forum for suggestions, matters of concern and feedback.

#### **Key points arising from the presentations and the discussion**

##### **Evaluation – Deborah Lock**

This focused on the students' feedback. Although the numbers are small, the 46.5% response rate was good. All agreed that the employers' feedback will be especially interesting.

- Generally the messages were positive; some 'neutral' responses reflected the early stage of the degree programme; concerns tended to be in operational areas rather than the development of knowledge and skills
- Further probing is needed on the extent of suitable opportunities in the workplace, and to what extent the students feel part of a community
- A process needs to be developed for including 'new' partners and students

##### **PEI viewpoint – Roy Bowdler, IET**

- Very supportive of the 'Gateways' pathway (as one of several options), including for IEng
- Willing to engage in constructive dialogue with HEIs
- Learning contracts reviewed for 'fitness for purpose' and basic personalised advice given
- If numbers grow, will need to consider whether a specific process needs to be in place to ensure applications dealt with in reasonable time-scale

- Participant pays the same IET fee as any other member and entitled to the same level of career development support (voluntary mentoring, on line “career manager”, PRA etc)
- Would support HEIs establishing relationships with industrial sponsors and IET local/technical networks as a source of differentiation in the market place.

### **Other points raised by presenters and during the discussion**

Resourcing is a concern. Advice is to start small; get it right first with small numbers; being selective can be a smart way to deal with resource issues.

It can be challenging for an HEI to make the business case for this pathway purely in financial terms, so need to include other benefits.

Funding: employers are interested in the cost; consideration to be given to what information the EG project could provide centrally.

However, where industry is paying, the cost of the degree is not necessarily as critical as the cost of employees being off-site. Industry may be prepared to pay a premium for a model that retains their employees in the workplace, gives them 1-1 tuition, includes learning contracts, introduces flexibility etc.

Some feeling that the scale of the potential market might too large for one university to deal with. Could there be an arrangement to pass on prospective students to a university that has spare capacity, in line with more general sharing and collaboration amongst the university partners?

Involve industry representatives in driving it forward; they will then be keen for it to work.

Don't assume that engineering academics are too conservative to want to be involved in such innovative provision; you might be very surprised.

Consider using VLE and other such systems, and the re-use of materials used for MEng already delivered by VLE.

Consider whether a staff development programme is needed so that academics understand both aspects (the CEng competence and delivery of the MSc); this could provide the opportunity for academic staff development and academics to become professionally qualified themselves.

The model offers opportunities for knowledge transfer with professional engineers, better shared understanding between industry and academia; could be a marketing vehicle for KTPs; helps with an HEI's industry-facing mission.

Whilst there has been incremental rather than mass take-up, a missing element has been the involvement of employers; however the pathway is already meeting a need; and the changing HE landscape offers further opportunities.

Both HEIs and PEIs need to find ways to ensure a smooth throughput of applications as the rate of student progress may be slower than anticipated and ultimately not acceptable to employers.

Consideration should be given to what can PEIs offer by way of over-arching student support.

Promoting the pathway leading to IEng as a workforce development pathway is likely to be a more fruitful approach than targeting new graduates.

Generally there was a very clear willingness to make this project a success.

### **Way forward**

It was agreed that:

- there will be two Stakeholders' Group meetings a year
- all attendees will be kept updated by way of the periodic Engineering Gateways e-bulletin and email alerts, for example when new documents are published
- a web discussion group would not be established
- an occasional emailed question from the Secretariat about a specific issue that might arise was the preferred mechanism for on-going engagement.

### *Post meeting note*

*The Steering Committee has accepted an offer by Kingston University to host a seminar for universities to share practice on the operation of the model.*

## **Engineering Gateways** **Flexible Pathways to becoming a Professional Engineer**

### **Stakeholders' Group meeting**

**29 October 2009 at Weston House, 246 High Holborn, London WC1V 7EX**

#### **Programme**

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|--------------|--|
| <b>10.00</b> | <b>Coffee</b>  |
| <b>10.30</b> | <b>Welcome</b><br><br>Wendy Laynton, Chair, Gateways Steering Committee                                    |
| <b>10.35</b> | <b>Project Update</b><br><br>Deborah Seddon, Gateways Project Manager, EC <sup>UK</sup>                    |
| <b>10.45</b> | <b>Initial findings from an Evaluation of the Project</b><br><br>Debbie Lock, Chair, Evaluation Task Group |
| <b>11.00</b> | <b>PEI Viewpoint</b><br><br>Roy Bowdler, Senior Registration Coordinator, IET                              |
| <b>11.10</b> | <b>HEI Viewpoint 1</b><br><br>Professor Peter Mason, Kingston University                                   |
| <b>11.20</b> | <b>HEI Viewpoint 2</b><br><br>Dr Paul Shelton, University of Teesside                                      |
| <b>11.30</b> | <b>Employer/employer organisation Viewpoint</b><br><br>Nigel Spencer, ECITB                                |
| <b>11.45</b> | <b>Discussion of issues and opportunities</b>  |
| <b>12.30</b> | <b>Summing Up &amp; Way Forward</b><br><br>Richard Shearman, Director of Formation, EC <sup>UK</sup>       |
| <b>12.40</b> | <b>Thanks</b>  |
| <b>12.45</b> | <b>Lunch</b>   |

## Annex 2

### Delegate List

<b>Title</b>	<b>Firstname</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Dr	Joe	Allen	Northumbria University
Mr	Paul	Bailey	Royal Aeronautical Society
Dr	Peter	Barrington	Kingston University
Mr	Roy	Bowdler	Institution of Engineering and Technology
Dr	Keith	Brown	Heriot Watt University
Miss	Andrea	Chalk	Aston University
Dr	Chris	Dowlen	LSBU
Prof	Mike	Goodwin	Staffordshire University
Mr	Ed	Hansom	Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Mr	John	Harris	SEMTA
Mr	Petros	Khoudian	University of Hertfordshire
Miss	Wendy	Laynton	Chair - Engineering Gateways Steering Committee
Miss	Debbie	Lock	Kingston University
Mr	Peter	Martindale	InstMC
Prof	Peter	Mason	Kingston University
Dr	Noel	Perera	Northumbria University
Miss	Ellen	Ryan	Institution of Civil Engineers
Miss	Deborah	Seddon	Deputy Director of Formation, Engineering Council UK
Mr	Richard	Shearman	Director of Formation/Deputy CEO, Engineering Council UK
Dr	Paul	Shelton	Teeside University
Prof	Paul	Smith	Anglia Ruskin University
Mr	Nigel	Spencer	Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
Dr	Caroline	Sudworth	COGENT
Dr	Robin	Westacott	Heriot Watt University
Prof	Peter	White	Coventry University
Eur Ing Dr	Antony	Wilkinson	The University of Hull
Mr	Stuart	Woosnam	Thames Gateway College
Miss	Bobby	Wright	CIBSE Membership Communications Manager