

Westminster Higher Education Forum Keynote Seminar
The way forward for STEM subjects in Higher Education

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 6th December 2012

Venue: Sixty One Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET



**WESTMINSTER
HIGHER EDUCATION
FORUM**

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chairman's opening remarks**
Baroness Wall of New Barnet, Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning and Member, Associate Parliamentary Skills Group
- 9.05 - 9.30 **Key findings from the Science and Technology Sub-Committee I inquiry into STEM subjects in Higher Education**
Lord Lucas of Crudwell and Dingwall, Co-opted Member, House of Lords Science and Technology Sub-Committee I inquiry into *STEM subjects in Higher Education*
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 - 9.55 **Funding for 'Strategically Important Subjects'**
Elisabeth Edwards, Regional Consultant and Senior Higher Education Policy Adviser, North, HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England)
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.55 - 10.55 **Quality, course structure and access to STEM in Higher Education**
What more can be done to increase uptake of STEM subjects at degree level? Are there early indications that suggest increased tuition fees will impact on the uptake of STEM subjects? Are students adequately prepared for the transition from school to degree-level study? What steps could be taken to encourage diversity in terms of gender, ethnic origin and socio-economic background of STEM students, and to support them to work in the related sectors after graduating? Will the new student visa system impact on the number of students studying STEM subjects, and if so, what measures could be implemented to address this and increase the intake of home students? How could universities support teaching staff to ensure that their subject knowledge is up-to-date? Do current funding streams for STEM facilities and equipment meet the needs of universities? Do the structure and content of STEM degrees meet the needs of business and should businesses be involved in designing curriculums? What should be the role for pure degrees and applied courses, such as forensic science?
Kirsten Bodley, Chief Executive, STEMNET
Charles Welsh, Employer Relationship Manager, Skills for Justice
Professor Averil Macdonald, Professor of Science Engagement, University of Reading and Regional Director, National HE STEM Programme (London and South East)
Annette Smith, Chief Executive, Association for Science Education
Dr Laura Bellingham, Assistant Director, Research, Development and Partnerships Group, QAA
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.55 - 11.00 **Chairman's closing remarks**
Baroness Wall of New Barnet, Vice-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning and Member, Associate Parliamentary Skills Group
- 11.00 - 11.30 Coffee
- 11.30 - 11.35 **Chairman's opening remarks**
David Amess MP, Member, All-Party Parliamentary University Group
- 11.35 - 12.25 **Progression for STEM students - industry involvement, employment prospects and access to post-graduate study**
Are STEM graduates equipped with the necessary skills to compete in the labour market? Is the careers advice and guidance given to STEM students fit for purpose? How can more STEM graduates be matched with employment opportunities in the STEM sectors, and do courses provide transferable skills for work in other industries? Are enough graduates encouraged to progress to post-graduate and doctoral study if it is the right option for them, and are current funding arrangements sufficient to support this in the long term? Should industry offer incentives to graduates in order to attract them to STEM careers, such as support with tuition fees for post-graduate study? Should all STEM students have the opportunity to undertake a placement year during their degree, and would this improve employment outcomes? In what other ways could collaboration between universities and employers who require STEM graduates be enhanced, and how could best practice in this area be shared?
Dr Malcolm Skingle, Director, Academic Liaison, GSK
Dr Hilary Leever, Head of Education and Learning, Wellcome Trust
Professor David J Maguire, Vice-Chancellor, University of Greenwich
Professor Colin Blakemore, Professor of Neuroscience and Philosophy, University of London and Emeritus Professor of Neuroscience, University of Oxford
Lynn Tomkins, UK Operations Director, Semta
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.25 - 12.55 **STEM subjects in Higher Education - the next steps for policy**
Dr Joanne Hodges, Head of Science and Society, Knowledge and Innovation Group, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chairman's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
David Amess MP, Member, All-Party Parliamentary University Group
Jonny Roberts, Senior Producer, Westminster Higher Education Forum