



THE THIRD ENERGY RESEARCH SUMMIT

Business needs for PhD-level postgraduate training in energy

Response to the summit report

Discovery and innovation in science and engineering happen through creative people working in a high quality research environment. People are at the heart of knowledge and skills; and a secure future supply of researchers is essential for the research base and industry to be able to respond to as yet unforeseen challenges, to identify future opportunities, and to transfer knowledge - in person – when moving between the research base and industry. EPSRC will continue to make a major investment in PhD provision, and will align that investment through increased use of Doctoral Training Centres.

In addition, the EPSRC Engineering Doctorate Centres scheme has been reviewed. The review of EngD Centres evaluated the performance and relevance to national need of the current EngD programmes, and offers advice and recommendations to the individual Programmes and EPSRC. As a direct response to this review, the portfolio will be refreshed next year and the energy theme will be signposted as one of EPSRC priorities areas. Funding has been made available from the Energy Programme for both DTC and EngDoc. In addition, a marketing strategy is being developed to increase its visibility within both the academic and industrial communities. More information about the review and recommendation can be found at:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/PostgraduateTraining/EngineeringDoctorates/ReviewOfTheEPSRCEngDCentres.htm>

A sector strategy has been developed to increase EPSRC engagement with key industrial sectors. The energy sector is being represented by the power sector team. Its role is to work proactively in engaging companies and industrial associations in EPSRC processes as well as increasing the level of awareness about EPSRC schemes that are relevant to the industrial community. A communication and marketing strategy is being developed by the Power sector team, jointly with the Planning and Communication Directorate, to promote EPSRC strategies, policies and

funding mechanisms relevant to the industrial community, including EngD, Industrial CASE and Strategic partnerships. More information about the Power sector can be found at: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/Business/Sectors/default.htm>

The Industrial CASE scheme is also under review as the EPSRC intends to refresh its portfolio. The recommendation from the summit has been fed back to the relevant team within the organisation. The Power sector team has a role in identifying potential companies for Industrial CASE.

Recently, the EPSRC created a new section in its website about the Strategic Partnerships. It highlights the specifics of the funding mechanism. In addition, both the RC Energy Programme and the Power sector team are actively promoting and inviting businesses across the energy sector to form strategic partnership with the EPSRC. More information about Strategic partnerships can be found at: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/Business/Funding/SP/default.htm>

The EPSRC is encouraging the academic community to submit long-term research applications (4-5 years) and move away from the standard three years format. As a strategy, in 2008, the EPSRC will introduce the idea of Programme Grants as a new funding mechanism looking at flexibility and long-term research and development of grand challenges.

Both the RCUK and the EPSRC Power sector team are committed to engage with industry at the earliest opportunity in order to develop a share vision of tomorrow's challenges in partnership with the academic community.

Summary of the EPSRC Response

	Recommendation	Response
Industrial CASE	There should be a wholesale expansion of the Industrial CASE mechanism to ensure CASE students remain with their sponsoring organisation for a minimum period of employment and to promote more widely the scheme within the energy sector.	The EPSRC will refresh the portfolio next year and therefore the scheme is under review. The recommendation has been fed back to the review team. The Power sector team has a role in identifying potential companies for Industrial CASE.
EngDoc and DTC Schemes	Implement the Engineering Doctorate Centres scheme more widely in a less specific manner to cover all aspects of the energy research agenda.	The EPSRC scheme has been reviewed and as a response the portfolio will be refreshed next year and the energy theme will be signposted as one of EPSRC priorities areas. Funding has been made available from the Energy Programme for both DTC and EngDoc.
Strategic Partnerships	Increase the awareness of strategic partnerships and specify what the benefits to the partners involved are and clarify the mechanisms for its establishment.	Both the RC Energy Programme and the Power sector team are actively promoting and inviting businesses across the energy sector to form strategic partnership with the EPSRC.
Scheme flexibility	Collaboration with industry would be easier if there were more flexibility in the length of research projects, instead of most taking a standard of three years	The EPSRC is working to towards a cultural change within the academics community by encouraging them to submit long-term research applications (4-5 years) and move away from the standard three years format. In 2008, the EPSRC will introduce the idea of Programme Grants as a

		new funding mechanism looking at flexibility and long-term research challenges.
Partnerships with Universities	Research Councils should work with universities to help them promote the added value of the PhD to employers together with giving consideration to the support of business friendly Professional Doctorates	<p>The EPSRC has established 12 universities framework agreements that aimed to provide a more structured and systematic basis for discussions and to identify activities that we can work on together.</p> <p>The RC Energy programme has also funded the UK Energy Research Centre that co-ordinates a network research institutes and universities as well as bringing together key stakeholders.</p> <p>The University Partnership Awards is another mechanism that builds partnership with universities through universities chairs.</p>

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