

Annex D: Issues for consultation and response form: sustainable development

1. This is the electronic response form for the consultation document 'Sustainable development in higher education' (HEFCE 2008/18).
2. Responses should be e-mailed to sustainabledevelopment@hefce.ac.uk by **Friday 5 September 2008**.
3. We will publish an analysis of responses to the consultation. Additionally, all responses may be disclosed on request, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. The Act gives a public right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case HEFCE. This includes information provided in response to a consultation. We have a responsibility to decide whether any responses, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. We can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. This means responses to this consultation are unlikely to be treated as confidential except in very particular circumstances. Further information about the Act is available at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

Respondent's details

Are you responding: • On behalf of an organisation
(Delete one)

Name of responding organisation/individual	Institution of Chemical Engineers (ICHEME)
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Consultation questions

(Boxes for responses may be expanded to the desired length)

Consultation question 1: Do you agree that our vision (paragraph 21) is still appropriate and that the proposed objectives are sufficient to achieve this vision?

IChemE supports HEFCE's vision to promote sustainability teaching and research and to promote the sustainability of the HE sector.

Sustainability is an area to which most institutions sign up in principle, but which is complex, multi-disciplinary and challenging to really put into effect. It is essential that the research infrastructure within the UK is funded in a sufficient and consistent way over time to allow novel technologies and business models to be studied and particularly to facilitate cross-departmental and inter-disciplinary collaboration. Good examples of this include the work of the DICE initiative at Nottingham and HEFCE should continue and enhance its commendable efforts to support such collaborative ventures in which chemical engineers can and should play a leading part.

Similarly sustainability must be incorporated into undergraduate curricula and post-graduate research training. This will require funding to support the development and delivery of courses and modules, again multi-disciplinary in scope and cross-departmental in delivery. The exchange of good practice between universities will be helpful to avoid re-inventing the wheel. Again, there is no substitute for adequate funding for educational innovation and curriculum development in this vital area.

Because many institutions are seeking to progress the sustainability agenda within their engineering curricula it would be very valuable for some systematic, thorough comparative work to be carried out – looking at what different institutions are doing and why both in teaching and research, and what impact these measures are beginning to have. We believe that the best people to undertake such an exercise would be an organisation such as ourselves with an established network and detailed knowledge of the engineering sector within academia as well as the broader sustainability agenda in the UK process industries (for example our Chief Executive currently chairs the SusChem UK Steering Group and our Sustainability Subject Group includes leading academics and industrialists in an active professional community). We propose that with suitable resourcing from HEFCE we undertake such a benchmarking exercise drawing on inputs from our colleagues across the engineering and, if appropriate, the wider community as necessary and report back to HEFCE and the community within a period of a few months.

With respect to objective (f) to '*Facilitate a carbon reduction culture to significantly reduce carbon emissions across the sector*' we would comment that HEFCE should promote a wider set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) across the HE sector which should not be limited to carbon. The reporting should support current government advice on KPI reporting. For the education sector this could include reporting of greenhouse gases, waste and acid rain and smog precursors as set out in 'Environmental key performance Indicators' published by DEFRA.

Consultation question 2: Is the proposed action plan fully aligned with, and sufficiently complete to deliver, the vision?

IChemE supports HEFCE's key role to play in undertaking benchmarking exercises, publishing case studies and promoting best practice in sustainability teaching and research within HE. The HEFCE also has a key role to play in benchmarking and disseminating metrics on sustainability performance within the HE sector.

Comment on Support role 2 objective c, support role 3 f, g, h and support role 4 d and e. HEFCE should have a clear strategy on not just carbon but on the reporting and publishing of KPI statistics as part of the Estates Management Statistics. The KPIs should be in line with government guidance on environmental and sustainability reporting; however their value and the cost of data collection should be proportionate to the value of the data. We would also question the suggestion of promoting participating in Business in the Community indices, which cost currently £4,000 per year per organisation. Whilst a version of the BiC index questionnaire could be developed for HEI's a cost benefit of this should be undertaken.

Consultation question 3: Which actions should take priority?

IChemE supports priority being given to actions which support the funding of sustainability teaching and research. We also support priority being given to benchmarking, and publishing best practice in this area.

Consultation question 4: Do you feel that there are any other sustainable development activities which HEFCE could help support?

None to add

Consultation question 5: Are there any other ways in which you feel HEFCE could help promote sustainable development, in particular the non-environmental elements of the agenda? Views expressed need not be in the form of fully worked-up ideas.

We would reiterate our view expressed in the response to consultation question 2 in support of development and promotion of a set of cost effective metrics for the HE sector.

Consultation question 6: Should there be a sector strategy for carbon management? If so what should it look like?

Please see our response to question 2. Any strategy should not be limited to carbon.

Consultation question 7: Could the sector reduce carbon emissions earlier than the government target for 2050, for example 60 per cent by 2030-2040? How should we deal with interim targets?

IChemE believes that a decision to commit to reduce carbon emissions earlier than 2050 and define intermediate targets should be made following an analysis of data from the HE sector on carbon emissions, current establishment commitments and reduction programmes. We would support a review by HEFCE on KPI reporting, emissions and targets within the HE sector. Following such a review the data would be available to determine current and future rates of carbon emissions from the HE sector and form a view.

Consultation question 8: Do you have any other comments on the strategy or action plan?

No further comments