



Chemical Sciences Scotland Conference 2009 Skills Breakout Sessions Feedback

The following is a list of the points raised by delegates at the two workshop sessions. The implementation groups of the Skills topic Group were highlighted and the delegates were free to discuss what they thought was most important to them. There were three groups in each session and they were asked what they would like CSS do for them.

It was acknowledged that solutions to many of the points raised do exist somewhere but they are disjointed and not coordinated. Also due to many initiatives being developed, funding is diluted.

Careers / Contact with Education Providers

- Industry needs to sell itself to educators and inspire them as well as the learners
- Industry needs to develop a structured and coordinated approach to engagement with the education system
- Need to break down school resistance to change
- Is academia too detached from industry?
- Increase workplace sponsorship
- Teachers have perception of hierarchy of careers and stream talent accordingly (law, medicine etc)
- Industry to work with education to excite and interest students/pupils – de-jargon and make it more engaging and relevant to the world of work
- Link industry engagement to the curriculum
- Secondment/job swap programme
- Resurgence of sandwich programmes
- CSS to manage and coordinate industry engagement with education and stakeholders – contextualise the learning process
- More information / examples of jobs & careers in the industry – people profiles
- Need to get more small companies involved and show the breadth of the industry
- Develop a “map” of companies and people willing to engage with education sector and educators who are receptive to working with industry
- Develop profile of science ambassadors (we need a Jamie Oliver for the chemicals sector)
- Is funding the main barrier to engagement with teachers (back filling for teachers on courses or industry engagement)?
- Promote career pathways not jobs

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Workforce Development

- Develop/promote programme for business skills (start up issues and practical skills such as development of job descriptions and costing products)
- Facilitate skills development – seminars & best practice clubs?
- Lobby for funding for upskilling/short course programmes
- Could Scottish employers work with the National Skills Academy or the process industries (NSAPI) model in Scotland? Would this enhance employer led training?
- Short courses to meet upskilling needs – more rounded balance between technical and BIT skills
- Mentoring for managers and supervisors (also senior management of small/start up companies)

- Is there a greater issue around technician level education than that of graduates?
- Funding of upskilling courses / training an issue
- Need to review funding models for training and upskilling
- Re skilling of scientists who have not worked in the sector
- Retraining opportunities – people with similar skills coming in to industry

Curriculum Development

- Are we producing graduates with the skills needed?
- Resistance of graduates to tackle problems – attitude and behavioural skills.
- Need for good general education, progression through smaller, specific upskilling courses as career develops
- Should we promote the employed route; apprenticeship – technician – graduate (INEOS/FVC/HW model?)
- How do we develop quality educators?
- Preferential funding for the sciences – practical skills more expensive to develop
- Do programmes include risk awareness and business acumen?
- Candidates not “interview ready”
- Industry expects too much from graduates & school leavers when entering the workplace



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Profile & Engagement

- CSS to help with connectivity between agencies to identify responsibilities and roles
- Engage better with Scottish and National Government
- More consultation and engagement with Scot Gov on apprenticeships
- How do we keep scientists in science?

Miscellaneous

- Do we have the right balance of UK overseas graduates? Are places for UK undergrads lost due to overseas students?
- More use and awareness of National Occupation Standards (NOS) in development of qualifications, job descriptions & recruitment