

**Note of Meeting**  
**Held at Glasgow Caledonian University**  
**27 May 2014**

	<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Apologies</u></b>
Aberdeen	Alison Jenkinson	Bryan MacGregor, Mike Greaves
Abertay		Nia White
Caledonian	Doug Greenhalgh	Val Webster
	Alistair Corbett	
Dundee	David Coates	
Edinburgh	Arthur Trew	Lesley Yellowlees
Glasgow	Trevor Hoey	John Chapman
Heriot Watt	Phillip John	Alan Miller
Highlands & Islands		Ian Leslie
Napier	Sally Smith	Sandra Cairncross, Mark Darlison
Robert Gordon		John Watson
St Andrews	Colin Allison	Alan Dearle
Stirling	Lindsay Ross	
	Ian Simpson	
Strathclyde	Iain Hunter (Chair)	Scott Macgregor
West of Scotland	David Smyth	Roddy Williamson, Sabbir Ahmed
CaSE: attending link	Maria Cataluna	
Secretary	Malcolm Allan (GCU)	
Attending (item 2)	Sarah Main	Director, CaSE
Attending (item 6)	Scott Bryce	SSERC, Education Support Officer - STEM
Apologies (item 8)	Linda Somerville	Scottish Resource Centre for Woman in STEM
Attending (item 9)	David Harrison	EPC, Hon Secretary

## **1. Chair's Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed all present, followed by round-the-table introductions. Some re-ordering of agenda items was agreed (as presented below). A particular welcome was given to invited speakers; Sarah Main (CaSE), Scott Bryce (SSERC) and David Harrison (EPC). Linda Somerville from the Scottish Resource Centre for Woman in STEM tendered her apologies and this item (8.) was deferred to the next meeting.

## **2. Campaign for Science and Engineering ([www.sciencecampaign.org.uk](http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk))**

Dr Sarah Main (Director of CaSE) presented and led discussion on this item ([Sarah Main Presentation](#)). CaSE (Campaign for Science and Engineering in the UK) works to ensure that science and engineering are high on the political agenda and that the UK has: world-leading research and education; skilled and responsible scientists and engineers; and successful innovative business. CaSE is funded by individuals and organisational members from industry, learned societies, universities, and research charities. Dr Main cited a range of key areas that CaSE had been working on:-

### **CaSE Strategy for the 2015 General Election and Spending Review**

CaSE is setting out its plans for political engagement over 2014, to influence the manifesto development process towards the 2015 General Election and Spending Review. CaSE have hosted a series of Opinion Forum meetings to inform the basis for advocacy and campaigning work in the run-up to the election.

The meetings covered the following issues:-

- Immigration
- Diversity
- Research funding
- Education
- Scientific advice in government

#### Immigration Policy – UK visa problems worry scientists (Nature, Vol 506, 6 February 2014)

There has been a significant decrease in the number of students, scientists and engineers entering the UK from overseas in recent years. CaSE has expressed concern over this and is actively lobbying government to revise its policies and procedures to remove barriers to the UK attracting talented scientists and engineers from overseas. There has been some historical success with for example the introduction of a system endorsed by the Royal Society and Royal Academy of Engineering. However, there is ongoing concern and CaSE remains actively involved.

#### Improving Diversity in STEM

Since the CaSE 2008 report, diversity is now high on the political agenda but diversity is far from being ‘delivered’. CaSE have published a new report ([CaSE Diversity in STEM](#)) which recommends tangible actions for the Government and the sector to take.

#### UK Government Investment in Science (The Economic Significance of the UK Science Base, CaSE Briefing Note, April 2014)

The UK Government investment in Science and Engineering has in recent years been level, which although better than other areas does not compare well with the rest of the world and is therefore eroding our competitiveness on the world stage. CaSE has not only highlighted the lack of sufficient investment but has also highlighted the economic benefits of investment (i.e. added value).

*Action: - Deans are encouraged to feed views into CaSE consultations and actively engage in its activities to promote and develop the global positioning of the UK's Science and Engineering Sector.*

### **3. Future Chair of DSES**

Professor Iain Hunter indicated he would not be continuing as Dean of Science at the University of Strathclyde after the summer break and therefore it would not be appropriate for him to continue as Chair of DSES. After a short discussion Professor David Coates (Dean, School of Learning and Teaching, College of Life Sciences, University of Dundee) was nominated and voted in as the new Chair of DSES, as of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014. It was also highlighted that consideration should be given to the position of Chair of the Education Group of DSES currently held by Professor Coates.

*Action: - The Chair (DSES) to identify a new chair for the Education Group from its current membership.*

*Action: - The Chair (DSES) to provide a short Biography to be placed on DSES website.*

### **4. Note of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 Meeting, and Matters Arising**

- a) Subject to a minor amendment to item 8 (CaSE and Scotland) which should have indicated that ‘the Government had already auctioned the UK's 4G mobile spectrum’ the circulated note was accepted as an accurate record.
- b) Doug Greenhalgh indicated that on following up on accessing defence expertise he had concluded this was not a viable option for the group.
- c) All other matters arising are covered in agenda items below.

## 5. Report from Education Group

Members were asked to note the content of the report circulated (DSES Education Group Report to Deans May 2014, including poster describing work of group) as background to agenda item 5.

### Widening Participation

A subgroup of the Education Group met on 31<sup>st</sup> March with Miriam Craven, Team Leader Student Support and Participation at the Scottish Government and Russell Gunson, SFC's Assistant Director, Access & Inclusion. The paper presented was well received and the Government and SFC's officers offered support in developing a fuller paper to be taken to a wider group of key stakeholders including a group of FE STEM coordinators. In addition Professor Coates made the following observations to inform further progress:-

- Each HEI sets a different set of requirements for FE entry which can act as a barrier to widening opportunities and choice for FE students to enter HE.
- It would be useful to develop a core set of FE courses for entry to any HEI offering STEM.
- SFC are developing a document to facilitate discussion to take the above forward.
- Requires a step change to STEM (SIMD40).
- Focus on HNC as access course rather than HND.

Members voiced their encouragement and support to Professor Coates and the Education Group to progress the proposed course of action and looked forward to receiving further reports on this.

### Embedding Creativity and Innovation in STEM Degree Courses

The Education Group invited David Adams (STEM & Healthcare UK) to present to the Education Group on the above. This is seen as a key area of development, would also be applicable to FE and would facilitate greater synergies between FE and HE. Professor Coates recommended that Deans consider inviting David Adams to present to DSES at a future meeting.

*Action: - Professor Allan to invite David Adams to a future DSES meeting.*

## 6. Enhancing Support for Schools through Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Learning

Scott Bryce presented on this item and tabled two papers ([Annual report March 2014 v2.doc](#), [Deans Presentation Scott Bryce.pptx](#)). Scott provided an outline of his role and a summary of progress made to date. He indicated that his role would come to an end in January 2015 but that discussion was ongoing regarding funding and continuation beyond this. He indicated that good progress had been made (as summarised in attached Annual Report) and also emphasised that CPD for teachers directly linked to CfE development was the key to enhancing the quality of the learning experience for school students. This would provide a sustainable approach and would be much more effective than one off events. Progress in this area was dependent on an effective dialogue between Schools and HEIs since HEIs had key resources which would underpin this drawn from their STEM subject expertise. To better facilitate this dialogue Scott was encouraging all HEIs to set up a single point of contact for this via a generic STEM e-mail address for each HEI. Although the internal structures for STEM might vary within each HEI this arrangement would allow 'STEM enquiries' to be fielded to an appropriate area within the HEI. Currently approximately 50% of HEIs had set up a generic STEM e-mail address.

*Action: Scott to provide a list of those HEIs still to set this up. Deans are encouraged to facilitate this within their own HEI.*

Members asked how the needs of Primary Schools were being addressed. Scott indicated that the priority was to focus on Secondary Schools but that Primary Schools would benefit from progress made by their linked Secondary School.

## **7. Interaction with the Scottish Government on key research issues**

### **a) Research Funding**

For background members were asked to note the report cited in the agenda (HE Research in an Independent Scotland, April 2014). Discussion on this item was led by Professor Arthur Trew. Professor Trew highlighted that a range of studies indicated a potential net shortfall in research funding should Scotland become independent. The range varies from £36m to £97m per annum. This is recognised by the Scottish Government although their prediction is nearer £36m. The Scottish Government have indicated that it would make up the potential shortfall from its own money. However, for this to be effective this assumes that:-

- RCUK would continue to fund off-site facilities.
- That UK based charity sources would continue to fund research in Scotland (currently this is a significant proportion of research income).
- Increases in local administrative costs (e.g. a new Scottish Peer Review process) would be factored in as an additional cost and covered.
- RCUK willing to continue fund research in Scotland.
- Gap in EU funding plugged while issue of membership progressed.

The Deans expressed concern that although the Scottish Government report recognised the key strengths of research in Scotland its proposals made significant assumptions as highlighted above and that contingency planning was therefore essential.

*Action: - DSES to articulate its concerns as noted above through Universities Scotland, Royal Society of Edinburgh and CaSE.*

### **b) Unified Graduate Schools**

Discussion on this item was led by Colin Allison. Political response to this initiative still appeared to be 'lukewarm'. Unfortunately the exemplars tended to highlight the key message that the skills developed were being lost to other HEIs outside Scotland, i.e. minimal local/regional impact in terms of retaining key skills. Therefore the profiles were perhaps not politically appropriate at the moment. Colin further highlighted the difference between Pools and Innovation Centres particularly in the context of relatively small HEIs in Scotland. The Deans were of the view that it would be useful to continue with the dialogue with Muffy Calder (Chief Scientific Officer) on this.

*Action: - Colin Allison to continue to progress this with Muffy Calder with support from Pools as required.*

Colin tabled and presented a paper highlighting the benefits of establishing a Doctoral Training Programme - 'Physics for Health MDTP' ([Physics for Health MDTP.pdf](#)). DSES endorsed the paper, recommended that Innovation Centres were referenced and wished the group well with this.

## **8. Woman in STEM and Athena Swan**

Item deferred to next meeting.

## 9. Updates on relevant activities of UKDS and the EPC

UKDS – [www.deansofscience.ac.uk](http://www.deansofscience.ac.uk)

Professor Phillip John presented on UKDS having attended the December 2013 meeting. Phillip highlighted the following:-

- Concerns over differences in accreditation criteria within UK.
- Witty Report on Universities and Growth (the context is Anglo centric) published October 2013 and Government Response ([Witty Review Consultation](#))
  - HEIs should be represented in Local Enterprise Partnerships
  - UK 'Heat map' Publications and Citations

The UKDS group expressed a wish to meet with DSES.

*Action: Professor Allan to investigate basis for a joint meeting and follow up as required.*

EPC – <http://epc.ac.uk>

Professor David Harrison (Hon Secretary EPC) presented and led discussion on this item. David highlighted the work of EPC over 2013/14 and tabled EPC's Review of the year: 2013/14 ([Review flyer 2013-14.pptx](#)), in particular he outlined the significant issues with regard to the low participation of certain ethnic groups, such as Afro Caribbean in STEM HE (also refer to CaSE report on Diversity, agenda item 2.). The EPC are also active in two of the four implementation workstreams stemming from the Perkins Review into Engineering Skills ([Perkins Review](#)). The Deans asked for more information on the 'Gender Benchmarking tool to support Athena-Swan submissions' developed by EPC. David indicated that EPC members could access this via the EPC website.

## 10. DSES Website – [www.dses.ac.uk/](http://www.dses.ac.uk/)

Professor Malcolm Allan highlighted the status of the DSES website. Malcolm indicated that while the website structure was fit for purpose it required some minor adjustments and most importantly kept refreshed with the work of DSES and its Education Group. However, the website was not very visible via standard search engines but this could be resolved by HEIs providing links to the above URL. The Deans asked that Professor Allan conveyed their thanks to Edinburgh Napier University for continuing to host and support the DSES website.

*Action: Professor Allan to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the DSES website, ensure it is kept up to date, and remind Deans of the access details for the members area.*

*Action: - Deans to arrange for links from their School/Faculty websites to the DSES website.*

## 11. AOCB

None raised.

## 12. Business, date and location for the next meeting

The next meeting will be held in October 2014, on a date to be consulted on. The location will be Dundee University.

*Action: - Professor Allan to confirm date and venue.*

The Chair expressed thanks to Glasgow Caledonian University for hosting the present meeting.