



# Engineering Professors COUNCIL

The voice of engineering academics

## Making waves

Strategic plan 2017



# Supportive Representative

## Engineering Professors Council

### Strategic plan 2017



The Engineering Professors' Council (EPC) was founded in 1994 as a collective voice for heads of engineering departments throughout UK higher education. Since then, it has grown in support, reach and influence.

But now, more than twenty years on, the challenges have changed and the EPC needs to adopt a strategic approach.

**Representative ● Authoritative ● Influential**

Looking forwards, the EPC needs to represent not only department heads, but also the entire engineering academic community from professors to those just starting out in their careers. Our concerns are shared and our voice should be united – we are louder and stronger together.

The EPC already enjoys an established record of policy impact and we will extend our influence by basing our message on the expertise of our members and on research.

**Collaborative ● Principled ● Supportive ● Inclusive**

The EPC is more than a mouthpiece though. It exists to support its members by helping the community to work together – and to work in partnership with those outside academia who share our goals. Through sharing insights and views, we can build on the professionalism of our members, welcoming new people and ideas and ensuring engineering academia serves our students, our institutions, our economy and our planet.

The EPC is committed to **our vision** that, *as a crucible for the nation's innovation and skills base, engineering in higher education will be held in high esteem and the perspective of its workforce shall be respected and influential.*

With this vision before us, the EPC Executive Committee agreed the time was ripe for the EPC to ask itself how best to serve its membership as effectively as possible.

This strategic plan – which institutes new structures, goals and initiatives – is the result of a process of consultation, creative discussion and deliberation over the past six months.

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Engineering Professors Council **Strategic Plan 2017**



# Our mission and values



## Our mission

- To represent the perspectives of engineering academics to the wider higher education sector, to the governments of the UK and to the wider population.
- To ensure engineering academics are informed of developments in national and sector policy that may affect them.
- To encourage and facilitate the sharing of best practice and resources to enhance the professionalism of engineering academics.
- To work in partnership with other organisations in the higher education and engineering sectors to achieve the EPC's vision.
- To be inclusive in all the EPC's activities, supporting the involvement of academics at all stages in their careers, whatever their background, and supporting the diversity of the sector.

## Our values

To the outside world, the EPC should be recognised as:

- Influential – able to achieve impact or change whether in national policy or in academic practice.
- Representative – speaking on behalf of all engineering academics.
- Authoritative – speaking from a position of expertise.

To our members, the EPC should represent:

- A collaborative approach – a willingness to work with our members and with other stakeholders in the broader interests of our members.
- Principled – acting honestly, transparently for the wider good.
- Support – meeting our members' needs and enhancing their professionalism.
- Inclusiveness – supporting the diversity of the HE engineering sector through its institutions, its staff and its students.

# What should the EPC be?

## The bodies of the EPC



Currently, the principal body of the EPC is the Executive Committee. This encourages a centralised group of (mostly) senior staff who are involved, perhaps at the cost of engaging engineering academics across the whole sector. To represent the wider sector most effectively, the structure of the EPC should be open and democratic.

In the past, the EPC has had a stronger system of representation of member institutions through individuals in each university department who were nominated to act as a liaison, but the relationship was too much about expecting them to support the EPC rather than the other way round.

The strategic plan proposes to reinstate this system of representation at the core of the EPC. Importantly, it is also proposed to develop **a sector-wide, national network for engineering academics** – that operates both virtually and through services and events – that is more inviting to all engineering academics at every stage in their careers.

No other organisation speaks specifically on behalf of the entire engineering sector in HE



# The bodies of the EPC

## The Council



**The collective body of university representatives should itself be the body described by the name 'the Engineering Professors' Council'.**

Each institution will be asked to nominate up to three named individuals to be Representatives to the Council (ideally representing a cross-section of engineering disciplines or departments in the institution). This will be the principal strategic and policy-making body of the EPC. Council Representatives will be expected to:

- attend annual meetings (at the AGM);
- elect Directors, members of the Board, Committee chairs and the EAN Convenor;
- disseminate information from the EPC to colleagues within their institution, for instance about policy developments, events and resources, and to act as champions of the EPC within their institution;
- feed back to the Council the views of their colleagues and institution (through consultations, etc);
- ensure that the EPC Executive has up-to-date contact details for academic colleagues who are entitled to access EPC benefits;
- ensure that the EPC Executive has a membership contact who is responsible for handling renewal of membership. This may be the same person as a Representative, but ideally there would always be more than one named contact.



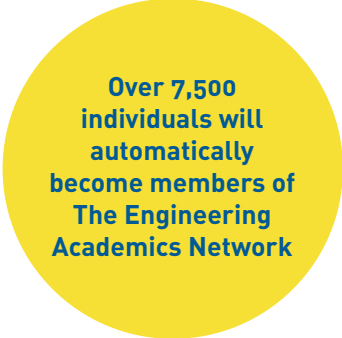
## The Engineering Academics Network



A new body, the **Engineering Academic Network**, will be created to promote direct communication with the wider community of engineering academics.

**Every individual academic staff member in subscribing institutions will automatically be a member of the EAN.** Individuals working in engineering academia, but not in subscribing institutions will also be able to join.

The EAN will be the focus for the delivery of EPC services. That is to say, the EPC itself will principally be the *representative and advocacy* body, whereas engagement with individual academics through web activities, events and communications will largely be through the EAN.



Over 7,500 individuals will automatically become members of The Engineering Academics Network

Supported by the Executive, the EAN Convenor will be responsible for ensuring a programme of engagement throughout the year for the EAN members. They will be a member of the Board and report to it.

The creation of the EAN will necessitate technical development by the EPC, such as better contact management systems and a redeveloped website with a new members' area for EAN members. This will allow us to maintain communications with the members that are relevant to their needs and interests and only as often as they want to receive them. This will also allow us to accommodate the work of the EAN through, for example, discussion forums. However this may also be achieved through existing platforms such as LinkedIn.

Within that online support community, it is envisaged that 'communities' of members with shared special interests would be formed to support, for example, early career staff and sectoral groups.

**Once approved by the AGM, the Engineering Academics Network will launch before the end of 2017.**

# The bodies of the EPC



## The Executive

The Executive – the staff of the EPC – will carry out the activities of the EPC in pursuit of the mission. The Executive Director will be redesignated as Chief Executive to reflect the fact that this post is not a ‘director’ in a legal sense and in line with other changes below.

## The Board

It is proposed that the Executive Committee changes its name to the Executive Board to better reflect its governance role. It will exercise the authority of the Council in determining the operations and activities of the Executive.

## The Directors

The Directors of the EPC will continue as present to hold the roles of President, Vice President (who shall be either the president elect or the immediate past president), Secretary and Treasurer. As at present, they shall be ex officio members of the Executive Board. In practice, Board meetings will double as Directors’ meetings (as Committee meetings do now).

## The Committees

There are currently three sub-committees: Recruitment and Admissions; Engineering Education and Employability Skills; Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer. These will continue as ‘Committees’ to pursue particular on-going concerns of the EPC. They will be expected to meet on an ad hoc basis as they see fit, given their activities. They will report to the Board.

Committee chairs will be elected by the Council, but other Committee members should be recruited at the discretion of the chair, with support from the Executive, as appropriate to the work of the Committee. The expectation is that they would be academics from member institutions, but where appropriate, the chair should invite others to join the Committee or attend and support.

A key responsibility will be to scan the horizon for issues and challenges that may affect members of the EPC or EAN, to decide how best to respond to those issues and, as necessary, to establish working groups to do so.



## Working groups

The Council, Board or Committees may also establish other groups to pursue other activities on an on-going or specified basis.

Among other working groups, we currently have groups focused on two particularly high-profile issues:

- **Degree apprenticeships** producing a 'green paper' on the academic and pedagogic considerations in establishing new degree apprenticeships and organising an event (in partnership with the RAEng) to promote discussion and sharing of best practice.
- **The HE Hub for Engineering**, which will be a virtual repository of resources to support the professionalism of engineering academics and building on the RAEng's efforts with the HE Focus website.

## Communities

The EAN will be a network for all engineering academics in the UK, but to ensure ongoing engagement, it is important to serve the individual interests of members by forming communities of special interest groups within the larger network.

Some of these already exist within the EPC as the seven recognised **sectoral groups**, each of which represents a separate engineering discipline. In the past the relationship with the EPC has been loose, because the mechanisms for engaging the sectoral groups and their members have been lacking and so the mutual benefits of working more closely together have not been clear enough to motivate it. That has occasionally led to overlaps and even competition between interests and events. The EAN will provide a clearly supportive way for sectoral groups to engage with all staff who may be interested in their work and will incentivise a more collaborative and connected approach.

Other communities will be formed within the EAN. For example, there is already interest in establishing communities for **early careers staff** and **department heads**.





# Meetings and events



## Annual General Meetings

The Annual General Meeting will be **the primary meeting of the Council**. It will appoint Directors, Board members and discuss key issues facing the sector. Last year and this, the AGM has been timed to coincide with events that facilitate discussion beyond the functional responsibilities of the AGM. This is a positive way of ensuring the representation of members' views. In future years, it may be possible to use such discussions to formulate agreed policy positions for the EPC and to set campaign priorities.

Only the Council Representatives (or their named proxies) will have voting rights at Council meetings, being up to three votes per higher education institution, regardless of size.

## Congress

The Annual Congress will continue, becoming **the primary meeting of the Engineering Academic Network**, an opportunity to network; to share best practice; to gain a better understanding of policy, debate it and consider policy positions that may be adopted by the EPC.

**This year's Congress, on the theme of Internationalisation, will take place at Coventry University from 11th to 13th September 2017.**

# Who are the EPC members?

## Categories of membership



The membership of the EPC should be defined more clearly with new categories of membership or affiliation.

### Institutional members

For most practical purposes, the membership of the EPC are the institutional members.

Every university or HE institution that engages in study or research programmes in any discipline of engineering should be entitled to become a Member of the EPC on payment of an annual subscription on a sliding scale based on their number of full-time equivalent engineering academic staff.

If an institution has more than one unit (e.g. departments, faculties, etc) that may be described as engineering, their single institutional membership will cover **all** units and the subscription will be calculated on the basis of the cumulative FTE staff of all the units. This will be cheaper than units joining separately.

The EPC's institutional members include nearly 90 universities, representing almost every engineering department in the UK — and more are joining all the time.

### Individual members

Individual academics are not members of the EPC, but rather **members of the Engineering Academic Network**. They will automatically become eligible for membership of the EAN when their HE institution becomes a member of the EPC. All that is needed is that the institution should provide the names of eligible staff.

Individuals should also be allowed to join the EAN if they are not affiliated to an institutional member (for instance, because their institution has not chosen to join, because they have retired, or because they are not currently employed by any academic unit). A membership package will be developed for individuals involving a modest annual fee.



**Campaigns**  
Proactive lobbying of policy-makers, PEIs and the media

**Responding to change**  
A unified and informed response on policy consultations by Governments, funding councils, etc

**A national voice**  
Your voice on national committees and advisory groups

**Represent**

**EPC member benefits**

**Communities**  
Access to the EPC's groups for different engineering disciplines, early careers staff, etc.

**Network**

**Making contacts**  
Regular events providing networking and mentoring opportunities

**Engineering Academics Network**  
All academics based at EPC member institutions are automatically enrolled in the new network



# EPC Membership Benefits

## Inform

**EPC Bulletin**  
Regular emails keeping you informed about the latest policy changes, news and events

**Up-to-date online**  
Access to the exclusive members' area of the EPC website

**Briefing events**  
Discounted or free for members

## Support

**Data analysis**  
Members-only access to in-depth HE data analysis saving time and cost in reporting, planning and strategy

**Resources**  
Access to the EPC's online bank of best practice resources and toolkits

**Events**  
Our programme supports professionalism in teaching, research and leadership, discounted or free for members



## Categories of membership



### Partners

There are many organisations in the engineering sector – PEIs, RAEng, Engineering UK, Primary Engineer, WES, NCUB, etc. – with which the EPC would wish to establish an on-going recognised relationship.

It is intended that such relationships would lead to better collaboration. This is important as the resources of the EPC will always be limited and far more can be achieved by aligning ourselves with other organisations with which we share interests. Not only is this more cost-effective, such collaboration exemplifies the common purpose of the sector.

For example, RAEng is currently a member of the EPC and pays a subscription as if it were a large university. However, it enjoys few of the services that members can access but benefits from a relationship with the EPC in other ways. Meanwhile, the IET has sponsored EPC events and has provided a free venue for conferences – as has IMechE – but they are not members. It would make sense to establish an agreed format for these relationships and approach other organisations to enter into similar partnerships.

To this end, we will develop a package of benefits for Partners including recognition on the EPC website, news about forthcoming events and activities, possibly membership of the EAN for their individuals, inclusion of notices in our communications to EPC members and EAN members, etc.

We would expect to receive benefits in return. In the case of organisations that are in a position to support the EPC financially, we would expect to receive a fee for Partner status, but this would be considered on a case-by-case basis and there would be discretion to accept benefits in kind or even a relationship in which we offer more support than we receive.

Partners – and the terms of partnership – would be subject to approval by the Council or Board.



## Supporters

The EPC's ability to reach its members already represents something of potential value to certain organisations. As we develop the EAN, this value will increase. By not realising that value, we are doing a disservice to our members because we are limiting the resources at our disposal to support them and we are expecting them to fund our activities in full at a time when academic budgets are tight. Furthermore, we are not fulfilling the potential to connect our members with organisations that might provide services, products, expertise or even funding which may help them.

Through recognised commercial relationships, we can help supporters to realise the value of access to our membership, while protecting our membership from unwelcome marketing. We can embed supporters' messages, where these are appropriate – such as in conference packs or as clearly delineated commercial messages in our regular communications – and we can set and control the terms of financial support.

It is not intended that this should be rolled out formally until other developments, such as the establishment of the EAN, have been achieved, but work should start on formulating a value proposition for supporters.



# What should the EPC do?

## Representing members



The EPC should prioritise the following five activities which are aligned to delivering the EPC's mission:

### Public affairs

The EPC should engage in the public policy agenda particularly as it relates to engineering and higher education. There are four parts to the process:

#### Consultation

The EPC Committee has recently adopted a consultation protocol (published on the website) to establish agreed processes for capturing the opinions of its members. Over time, this will be further developed to include:

- providing (evidence-based) briefing notes;
- explicit calls for feedback from Council Representatives and EAN members via consultation surveys;
- working groups to consider policy positions;
- votes on standing policy statements by the Council;
- review of consultation submissions by the Board, Committees and/or individual experts.

#### Thought leadership

With the benefit of consultation, the EPC should act as a thought leader, being creative in developing policy solutions and proposals. This should include proactive campaigning, rather than merely reacting to consultations.

This work will often be most effectively conducted in collaboration with other stakeholder groups such as the E4E group that formulates engineering sector-wide responses to education policy.





## Representation

The EPC should seek opportunities to influence policy debates at all stages:

- by working with think tanks and policymakers in the formulation of policy;
- through contacts with the civil service and government;
- throughout the Parliamentary process;
- with sector agencies tasked with implementing policy;
- through media campaigns.

**In the past few months alone, the EPC has responded to consultations on REF, TEF, industrial strategy, Brexit, apprenticeships, HE funding, skills and HE data**

## Dissemination

Just as important as influencing policy is promoting the understanding of policy among our members through briefings, analysis and updates. This should also including reporting back on the impact of campaigns.





# What should the EPC do?

## Supporting members



### Information service

As well as disseminating information about policy (see above), the EPC should prioritise supporting members to develop evidence-based approaches to their activities by providing data analysis and access to best practice resources.

There are three key activities that support this:

- **Data analysis:** Through the EPC's HEIDI+ subscription, we can draw in raw data and analyse and reframe it in ways that will be useful to our members in, for example, planning, responses to REF, Athena Swan, TEF and so on. This will continue to be a key member-only benefit on the EPC website.
- **Engineering HE Hub:** In collaboration with RAEng, the EPC is in the process of developing their HE Focus website into a dynamic web tool that catalogues and signposts resources that support the professionalism of engineering academics. This will in due course become a tool that can be accessed on the EPC website and elsewhere.
- **Newsletter:** The InfoDigest newsletter is produced monthly and is a cornerstone of our communications. However, it is not responsive to the individual interests of recipients and will be redesigned to be more accessible, informative and customised.

### Events and networking

As well as regular events – such as the Congress and the Recruitment & Admissions Forum, both of which were well attended this year – in recent months, the EPC has been increasing our programme of planned events, usually working with partners such as the IET (the New Approaches Conference in May 2017), RAEng (the Degree Apprenticeships Forum in July 2017) and the PHEE/PHOMME annual conference.

It is intended that the EPC should maintain a full programme of events, offered for free or at low cost to members, but representing minimal financial risk to the EPC. Indeed, it is hoped that some events – through sponsorship or by achieving good attendance – should make a net contribution to the EPC.

Meanwhile, the EAN is being established to support the networking functions of the EPC, which should also be promoted through online networking activity.





## Professionalism support and resources

The professionalism of engineering academics may be supported through the sharing of evidence-based best practice (through, for example, the HE Hub for Engineering) and also through Continual Professional Development (CPD).

It is not intended that the EPC should become involved in the delivery of CPD itself as there are already several high-quality providers (such as PEIs and the HEA). However, there may be a role in facilitating and brokering CPD, through understanding the needs of members via the EAN and working with providers to make it available to individual academics.

## Mentoring

There is a demand for mentoring which the EPC cannot provide directly. However, the EPC can be instrumental in supporting individuals in establishing their own mentoring relationships.

For example, the EAN can be expressly established as an opportunity for peer-to-peer support or for establishing more long-term mentor mentee relationships. This has implications for the online service offered.

Informal mentoring should also be a by-product of the engagement of individuals in the Council as Representatives, in the Board as Board members or in Committees or Working Groups. These should be opportunities for individuals, particularly more junior staff, to learn from one other.



# Achieving impact



In order to achieve impact and demonstrate that we are doing so, it is important to have measurable outcomes. To this end, over time the EPC will develop a series of performance indicators aligned to each of its mission statements. These should include the engagement of members in activities.

However, not all success is measurable and it is important also to recognise achievements through reaching milestones, such as delivering important new initiatives (e.g. the HE Hub for Engineering) and monitoring our policy influence.

In order to achieve impact, the EPC also needs to present itself more professionally.

To this end, the EPC's brand identity has been refreshed (and is used throughout this document). This will be rolled out through all EPC communications and the website over the next few months.

Over the next two years, the EPC website will also need a major redevelopment to become a more engaging platform for interaction incorporating the EAN and allowing individual EAN member profiles.

The personalisation of the interaction between EPC and individual academics will facilitate a greater ability to understand each person's circumstances and needs. We will be able to identify, target and tailor our services to their requirements, thereby becoming more responsive and – in the process – encouraging their increased ongoing involvement with the EPC, the EAN and the wider engineering academic community.

The EPC annual Early Enrolment Survey provides members with in-year data on actual engineering student enrolments – rather than waiting 18 months for data from HESA



## Appendix

# List of acronyms



AGM	Annual General Meeting
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
E4E	Education for Engineering
EAN	Engineering Academics Network
EEES	Engineering, Education, Employability and Skills
EERN	Engineering Education Research Network
EPC	Engineering Professors' Council
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IET	Institution of Engineering and Technology
NCUB	National Centre for Universities and Business
PEI's	Professional Engineering Institutions
PHEE	Professors and Heads of Electrical Engineering
PHOMME	Professors and Heads of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
RAEng	Royal Academy of Engineering
RAF	Recruitment and Admissions Forum
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RIKT	Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
WES	Women's Engineering Society



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As a clear statement of the EPC's new strategy outlined in this document, we have launched out new brand identity. Brighter and more modern, the brand introduces our double-wave logo. Whether light, sound, fluids or chemical structures, the wave is a common thread throughout engineering, conveying change, direction and a sense of the power of moving together. For that reason, the logo includes diverse colours representing our diverse membership, spanning every engineering discipline and individual academics of all kinds. Working together, we shall make waves.

**PO Box 789 Godalming Surrey GU7 9FW**

**T: +44 (0)7786 176 028 ● E: [info@epc.ac.uk](mailto:info@epc.ac.uk) ● [@EngProfCouncil](https://twitter.com/EngProfCouncil) ● W: [epc.ac.uk](http://epc.ac.uk)**

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