

EPC Policy Forum – 20th May 2009

Work Based Learning Group Notes

Five minute feedback / summary:

- Students are now much less practical than they used to be.
- Demonstrating practical applications is particularly important in first year undergraduate studies to develop student enthusiasm for engineering.
- Companies must be incentivised to take sandwich students. Government must play a more active role here.
- The impact of placements locally should be measured and publicised to encourage further development.
- People in industry want to be taught by people with experience. Universities thus need staff with industrial experience, especially for teaching part-time and mature students.
- The key to understanding industry needs is establishing personal relationships between the key players.
- The needs of SMEs are very different to those of LEs. Students should be made aware of this.
- Any assessment must be based on pre-agreed and clear learning outcomes. It is easy to get side-tracked in the classroom.
- There is a wide spectrum of WBL, from sandwich courses to part-time mature students enrolled on traditional programmes.
- More recognition is needed for those staff developing and sustaining fruitful industrial links.
- Universities should take an holistic approach in balancing research with teaching and knowledge transfer into the workplace. Symbiotic relationships should be established.