

THE SOCIETY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSE TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
THE ECONOMICS OF HE, FE AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Introduction

1. The Society for the Environment is responsible for the registration of environmental professionals. We are the custodian of the Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and Registered Environmental Technician (REnvTech) registers, and since 2004 have established a sound platform as the body tasked with championing and registering the expertise of environmental professionals. The Society operates under a Royal Charter, which mandates us to promote the advancement of, the dissemination of, knowledge of, and education in good environmental practice for the public benefit.

Key messages

2. It is imperative that environmental sustainability is embedded into all higher education, further education and vocational training routes. Knowledge, understanding and skills to manage and enhance environmental sustainability are critical to the economy, fundamental to sustainable future growth.
 - 2.1. Future generations need to be informed about the limitations of our natural resources as well as the efficiencies that can be derived from re-using resources in a more sustainable, circular economy.
 - 2.2. This will help to equip our future generations with a holistic and long-term perspective as well as unleash innovation, thus sustaining the modern British economy.
 - 2.3. We strongly believe that this should be an integral part of all education and training, not an optional add-on.
3. To meet the current and future needs of enterprise and the labour market, post-16 education and training needs to provide breadth through transferable skills. Knowledge and understanding of sustainability as well as skills in sustainable practice provide a strong and futureproof foundation for a range of sectors in our changing economy.
 - 3.1. As there is a growing awareness of the competitive benefits of sustainable practices^{1,2}, employers are increasingly 'greening' jobs. And as the 'green economy' itself grows,

¹ Prince of Wales's Corporate Leaders Group & Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership "A Vision for a Strong, Sustainable UK Economy," January 2015 <https://www.corporateleadersgroup.com/reports-evidence-and-insights/a-vision-for-a-strong-sustainable-uk-economy> (accessed 14/09/17).

² LSE Growth Commission "UK Growth: A New Chapter," February 2017 <http://www.lse.ac.uk/researchAndExpertise/units/growthCommission/documents/pdf/2017LSEGCReport.pdf> (accessed 14/09/17).

employers will increasingly need people with knowledge, understanding and skills in sustainability³.

- 3.2. As an umbrella organisation for 24 professional bodies, we have witnessed significant numbers of mid-career moves into environmental professions⁴. Thus, we support breadth in education and training while we also encourage continued, lifelong learning for depth through enhancing expertise in practice.
 - 3.3. We strongly believe that this needs to be met with a collective commitment to continued professional development as well as professional body membership by employers and employees across all sectors, and to be supported by the Government.
4. The Government needs to develop ways to support education and training in sustainability, both culturally and financially, because, ultimately, it is a public good. Forward-thinking education institutions⁵ and companies are already committed to supporting employees in this area, but the Government needs to encourage and enforce this more widely to 'level the playing field', assist employers and ensure the continued, sustainable success of a strong and world-leading economy. High environmental standards will provide a competitive edge to our economy, enable us to meet our national and international commitments in this area as well as secure our future generations.
 5. Our response will be made publicly available on our website www.socenv.org.uk. We would be happy to provide further information and/or assistance. Please direct any comments or questions relating to the Society's response to:

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³ OECD "Employment Implications of Green Growth: Linking jobs, growth and green policies," June 2017 <https://www.oecd.org/environment/Employment-Implications-of-Green-Growth-OECD-Report-G7-Environment-Ministers.pdf> (accessed 14/09/17).

⁴ IEMA "Environment & Sustainability Roles Continue to be the Career Change of Choice," May 2015 <https://www.iema.net/news/2016/01/08/Environment--Sustainability-Roles-Continue-to-be-the-Career-Change-of-Choice-/> (accessed 14/09/17).

⁵ EAUC "Next Generation Sustainability and Strategy and Structure," May 2017, available at <http://www.eauc.org.uk/research> (accessed 14/09/17).