



Press Release

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UK UNIVERSITIES URGED TO REFORM

A report launched today by NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts), the NCGE (National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship) and the CIHE (The Council for Industry and Higher Education) warns that unless universities embed entrepreneurship education in all parts of university life they risk losing out to fierce international competition.

The warning comes at a time when global companies - and young people - are choosing universities which develop students' entrepreneurial behaviours and skills over universities who see their role purely in terms of transmitting academic knowledge.

The year long report called '*Developing Entrepreneurial Graduates: Putting Entrepreneurship at the Centre of Higher Education*', used evidence that average student engagement rate in entrepreneurship education is 11% for UK students – most of which is taught through business schools – to develop the case for urgent change. Many students and academics, especially those in non-business disciplines, do not see its narrow focus on business start-up as relevant.

Jonathan Kestenbaum, CEO of NESTA, said "Universities must lead the way in transforming how higher education prepares the UK's workforce for its future economy. This is critical in the current economic downturn when entrepreneurial graduates offer a real chance of helping economic prospects."

Keith Herrmann, Deputy Chief Executive of the CIHE added "Pure business skills are no longer sufficient. To add value to the workplace, graduates will need to distinguish themselves by developing entrepreneurial skills that enable them to seize and exploit opportunities, take risks, think strategically, work flexibly, manage complexity, and acquire the more generic employability skills needed for the workplace, such as team-working, communication skills, and commercial awareness."

The report identifies a number of institutional barriers which impede the development of entrepreneurship education in universities. It identifies an opportunity for vice-

chancellors and higher education leaders to embrace entrepreneurship education as a central activity across their institution rather than allowing it to remain a tagged-on activity not embedded in any serious way within curricula. This report also reveals tensions between traditional academic 'instruction' and the experiential learning and group work approaches needed for effective entrepreneurship education. All this is compounded by short-term and unreliable funding.

Professor Paul Hannon, Director of Research and Education at the NCGE commented: "The report offers a framework to help universities make the necessary changes. We call on vice-chancellors, academics and entrepreneurship educators to work together with entrepreneurs, businesses and students to create a new emphasis toward entrepreneurship across UK higher education institutions. We need to do more to level the playing field across all regions, institutions and disciplines".

The report urges universities to re-think their role as drivers of regional economies by shifting their focus as purely transmitters of academic knowledge to centres of innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

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The full report is available at www.cihe-uk.com, and at the websites of our partner organisations www.ncge.com and www.nesta.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Report

'Developing Entrepreneurial Graduates' is a joint report by NESTA, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, the NCGE (National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship) and the CIHE (The Council for Industry and Higher Education). The three organisations are concerned by the need to expose UK students in Higher Education to environments which foster entrepreneurial mindsets to ensure that graduates are the innovators and creative entrepreneurs of the future. The foreword in the report has been written by Lord Karan Bilimoria CBE, Founder and Chairman of Cobra Beer and National Champion, National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship.

CIHE

The Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) is a high-level partnership between leading people from a wide range of businesses, universities and colleges. The Council leads in developing an agreed agenda on the learning issues at higher education level that affect our international competitiveness, social cohesion and individual development.

NESTA

NESTA is the National Endowment for Science, Technology & the Arts. Its mission is to transform the UK's capacity for innovation. It does this in three main ways: by working to build a more pervasive culture of innovation in this country; by providing innovators with access to early stage capital; and by driving forward research into innovation, with a view to influencing policy.

NCGE

The National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) is the UK's national body focusing on enhancing the entrepreneurial capacity of the Higher Education sector. We do this by: supporting long-term cultural change in our universities; shaping the institutional environment to be more conducive to enterprise and entrepreneurship; increasing the level of graduate entrepreneurial activity; and informing national policy and practice.