

**ESD, EMPLOYABILITY AND EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT
Event Report**

**Higher Education Academy Scotland
Higher Education Academy Education for Sustainable Development Project**

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Purpose of This Report

This report provides a summary of discussions at an event held at the University of Stirling on 2nd April 2009 for the Higher Education Academy Scotland, in conjunction with the HE Academy Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Project. The event was designed and facilitated on behalf of the HE Academy ESD Project by Dr Colin Brooks and Dr Alex Ryan to explore the intersection of 'ESD'¹ with two related thematic topics in HE: 'employability' and 'external engagement'.

Following an overview of the context (Section 1) and format (Section 2) of the event, an outline of the two headline presentations is provided in Section 3. The outcomes of the afternoon discussions and the closing remarks from participants are reflected in Section 4. In Section 5, the organisers reflect on the event, drawing conclusions and suggesting further action points to be included in the ongoing planning for the second stage of the UN Decade for ESD in Scotland.

¹ It is acknowledged that ESD ('education for sustainable development') and interchangeable terms such as EfS ('education for sustainability') are understood and defined in different ways across the education sector and in different subject areas; this report uses the term ESD and further definitions are available in the documents cited below.

1. Context for the Event

This event was organised in response to research carried out during 2008 to capture strategic developments, pedagogic activity and sector-level priorities across Scottish HE, during the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014 (UN DESD). This research culminated in a report, the *2008 Review of ESD in HE in Scotland*² (February 2009), which was submitted to HE Academy Scotland, Universities Scotland, and the Scottish Funding Council.

The Scottish Executive prepared an action plan for the UN DESD, *Learning for Our Future*³ (2006), and during 2009, consultation and planning is underway via the UN DESD Action Plan Steering Group to prepare for the second half of the DESD. In this second phase, particular attention will be paid to the role and work of tertiary education and to the issues arising from the HE research detailed above, together with the findings from research carried out across the further education (FE) sector during 2008⁴.

Initial responses to the *2008 Review of ESD in HE in Scotland*, from participants in the research and from those who commissioned and reviewed its findings, noted the relative weakness of 'external' or 'public' engagement among the range of activities undertaken by HEIs, and the uncertainties expressed in HE in relation to labour market demands and the needs of employers in relation to 'sustainability literacy'. This provided the impetus for the April event and the choice of opening presentations, plus the focus for discussions in the second half of the meeting.

2. Design and Participation

Fifty people expressed an interest in the meeting (and, where they were unable to attend, asked to be informed of the tenor of the discussion and the outcomes of the day). In the end, approximately 36 attended, which included varied types of roles: 12 members of academic faculty; six participants with different roles across the education sector; five HE educational development specialists; five participants from national and commercial organisations external to HE; four postgraduate (PG) students; and four colleagues in HE careers/employability roles.

It was striking that no one who could be classified simply (and perhaps crudely) as a commercial employer attended the event. This was despite endeavours on the part of the organizers to invite participation from those involved in large-scale graduate recruitment processes and from private sector businesses operating as placement providers to undergraduates, particularly in the field of environmental management. It appears that there is a need to find more effective means of engaging these parties in strategic discussions with those

² The complete report by Dr Alex Ryan can be downloaded at: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/esd_SFCreview08

³ The Action Plan can be downloaded at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/137705/0034170.pdf> (PDF 964KB).

⁴ Salter, J (January 2009) *Scotland's Colleges – Sustainable Development Education Survey*. The report can be downloaded at: <http://sfeu-sde-project.wikispaces.com/>

responsible for taking forward sustainability issues in HE, in relation to the skills profile of future graduate cohorts and the strategies adopted by individual HE institutions and at sector level in terms of HE policy.

After a brief introduction by Colin Brooks and Alex Ryan, there were two presentations, followed by brief discussions and comments. These two opening sessions were chosen to directly tackle the two key themes of the event, 'employability' and 'external engagement', and to prompt participants to consider ways of linking these themes with 'ESD'. The first was given by Dr Bethan Wood of the Dumfries campus of the University of Glasgow, with exemplification by Andrew Cole, past student at the Dumfries campus and Project Officer with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The second was given by Dr Jim Smyth and Dr Alasdair Ross of the History Department at the University of Stirling, with exemplification by Melanie Johnson of CFA Archaeology and David Sowerby, volunteer on the Prestongrange Industrial Archaeology Project.

After lunch, participants formed into five groups to discuss a range of questions suggested by the organizers and to generate comments and reflections on the issues at stake (see Appendix). These groups contained a mixture of participants from different roles and backgrounds, and an additional short period of reflection was spent with participants in groups of similar professional roles. Finally, four participants – from academic, graduate student, secondary education, and consultancy backgrounds respectively – were invited to offer brief and astringent comment on the issues that needed urgent attention, prior to the concluding comments and thanks to the participants for their contributions by Colin Brooks.

3. Resumé of the Opening Presentations

Dr Bethan Wood and Mr Andrew Cole (University of Glasgow & RSPB)

“HE and Collaborative Enterprise among Local and National Organizations”

Bethan Wood reviewed the process by which she secured placements for students on the MA in *Environmental Sustainability* programme and the MSc in *Carbon Management* at the University of Glasgow's Dumfries campus. Placements organised for these two programmes were usually offered as the alternative to the 15,000-word dissertation, and she noted that approximately four times as many students tended to choose placements over dissertations. This tactic also meant that the placement was generally not seen as a way for students to avoid taught material; the over-loaded curriculum, therefore, became less of an issue. Providers involved had included public sector conservation-based charities; an FE college; and a commercial consultancy – and although organising placements was time-consuming,⁵ the effort was thoroughly justified. Significant benefits were apparent for HEIs, in the positive effects for student employability and the reassurance for academic staff of seeing the value of their teaching material when put into practice by students on placement.

⁵ Due to the need to follow protocols for insurance, health and safety, and risk assessment; to put in place understanding about any intellectual property issues; and to safeguard effective Quality Assurance processes that satisfy the academic regulations of the HEI – time spent on these requirements could occasionally prove lengthy and the paperwork frustrating.

Those approached to provide placement opportunities had proved precise in the work opportunities which they provided; an appropriate academic level had been worked out and the student expertise was welcomed by providers. It was noted that the number of placements involved each year is quite small; scaling up such a programme would probably put considerable strains on the programme organizer and on placement providers. It was also striking that these organisations had very specific and quite demanding tasks for students (physically as well as intellectually): there was no sense that they were seeking cheap labour. Instead, placement providers had gone to some trouble to match their needs with student skills, and PG placements in particular would often provide extremely useful research contributions for providers, to inform their operations. The benefits for students were clear, in the ways that placements encouraged them to reflect upon and document their achievements, and in the development of both specialist skills and a range of transferable skills (e.g., team working, interpersonal and communication skills, and the ability to monitor and self-evaluate their professional learning and practice).

Andrew Cole reported that he had preferred the prospect of a placement to that of writing a 15,000-word dissertation; he wryly noted that, in the end, he had produced in excess of that number in his journal. He also pointed out that he had not originally been drawn to ornithological work (indicating the role played by stereotyping and prior judgement about professional choices). However, the sheer interest of the work he had been asked to do, together with the sensible mentoring that had nurtured his development, and the circumstances – in the open air – of his work, had combined to fire him with passion for his work and an unexpected sense of vocation. Both the range of tasks involved and the range of people with whom he had to interact had proved challenging. Bethan had pointed out that the reverse process was not unknown: a student had discovered during the course of a placement that they were not suited to employment in a particular area. Andrew had progressed through a series of fixed contracts with his placement organization and had since progressed to become a Project Officer in his own right.

Dr Jim Smyth, Dr Alasdair Ross, Ms Melanie Johnson and Mr David Sowerby (University of Stirling and Prestongrange Industrial Archaeology Project)

“HE and the Development of Community Understanding”

The Prestongrange Industrial Archaeology Project had been established with funding from East Lothian Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund to expand public use and understanding of this site, east of Edinburgh, which had been in use for 600 years prior to closure in the late 20th century. East Lothian Council wished to amass materials about the site and had contracted CFA Archaeology to encourage volunteers in developing its information base and its potential as a heritage site and public resource. However, the Council also had quite specific questions in mind to inform their excavation decisions – this was not simply ‘learning for learning’s sake’. Having previously used the services of the History Department of Stirling University, CFA Archaeology then contracted the department unit to train the volunteers in oral history techniques and palaeographical skills, to ensure that memories of previous workers at the site would be captured, and to enable volunteers to investigate the site’s extensive written records (particularly from the 17th and 18th centuries).

A number of challenging issues were raised during the presentation regarding the establishment and operation of projects that engage locally, in areas that tend to lack prioritisation in terms of charitable and other sources of funding. The university welcomed the opportunity to engage with a community project, especially as their evening degree programme (like so much 'adult education' provision) had been deemed unsustainable in the light of recent changes to the financial status of adult students. However, Full Economic Costing presented considerable problems, potentially pricing academic staff out of the market, especially when the potential contractor was from the public, rather than the private, sector. In addition, the challenge of securing ongoing funding for this type of project, to physically maintain the site and to further develop a cadre of volunteers to educate the visiting public, was considerable. This was despite the substantial 'value for money' that the project represented, in its collaborative use of academic, local and voluntary input to extend knowledge of the site, its history and its workforce. The project had also offered valuable learning for the public about issues of resource use, industrial development and community sustainability; members of the local community had frequently visited the site during the process, showing great interest in the preservation of their knowledge and skills and expressing their sense of identity and connection with the site itself.

The presentation also highlighted the Scottish dimensions to these issues: to support the project's aim, of enhancing public understanding of the nation's heritage, required that the volunteers become familiar with documents from the 17th century onwards. The presenters commented on the current lack of suitable online resources that provide the public with information and opportunities to learn the skills required for reading Scottish scripts. Problems of public educational facilities were also noted, in the limited opening hours of major national libraries, making access to resources extremely difficult for volunteers who give over their leisure time to such projects. In addition, the national pattern within Historical Studies at HE level in Scotland has been to reduce undergraduate (UG) provision in palaeography techniques and for this skill to be increasingly available only at PG Masters level. Accessing these necessary skills often involved considerable expenditure of time on the part of the students; calculating the cost was problematic for the trainers.

Melanie Johnson described the remit of CFA Archaeology as facilitating and organizing the preservation of the archaeological record, and the communication of that record and of its implications. She also spoke of the implicitness of the sustainability agenda within the work of professional archaeologists, and her sense of their duty not only to preserve culture, but to be involved in informing the broader public. They act both as intermediaries for those bodies seeking particular expertise from HE institutions and, as themselves, providers of archaeological expertise to those bodies. At Prestongrange, approximately 40-50 volunteers had formed a community of learners and experts within the broader community since the project had begun in 2004. Their extensive collective expertise often surpassed that of the 'experts' offering them training, and it had therefore been necessary to develop quite sensitive approaches to the learning relationships involved. The presentation highlighted the important role of trained volunteers in such community projects, in cascading their learning and experience to further members of the public, and contributing to the longevity and value of heritage sites. David Sowerby outlined the initial uncertainties among the volunteers about the new techniques that they needed to

learn and the role of training in boosting their confidence, noting also that the acquisition of new ICT skills was a particular 'lifelong learning' challenge for many who had taken part.

4. Summary of the Group Discussions

i. Leadership and Institutional Strategy in HE

The discussions underlined that HE does not operate in a vacuum and that when tackling ESD, academia must reconceptualize knowledge and relate that reconceptualization to social need: "with knowledge", commented one group, "comes the responsibility to act". The logic of academic development within and between disciplines (the supply side) goes hand in hand with the requirements of a changing society (the demand side). There was some doubt among participants as to whether HE institutions were geared up to meet this challenge. Academics gave (understandable) priority to blazing academic trails, yet institutional leadership to help transform learning in support of the sustainability agenda was felt to be distinctly lacking. Groups were concerned that sustainability was too often seen in a "narrow environmental sense", and as a topic promoted by particular interests. They highlighted the need to establish and work with a broad understanding of sustainability across academia.

It was thought that greater appreciation was needed of the long-term involvement and commitment that will be crucial to address future sustainability challenges: activities to promote sustainability must themselves be sustainable. The groups worried that financial constraints on HEIs not only limit their leadership role in the wider society but also lead them to encourage a "piecemeal" approach. Each institution needed an "overarching strategy", involving the curriculum, the campus itself, and the engaged community, but across HE there was a failure of nerve to become "exemplars". Such strategies would include not only what was expected of the institution itself, but also what was expected of each student. Here the discussion approached closely the notion of including competence with regard to sustainability issues within the ambit of 'graduate attributes'. The type of strategic revisions under discussion would likely mean changes in emphasis and in the structures of HE institutions, including the financial and audit systems within which HE operates. Participants noted that the combination of long-term commitment with flexibility of provision, which seems best to serve ESD, does not appear to be a sufficient priority of the current systems.

ii. Graduate Attributes and Student Understanding

There are many routes to sustainability literacy and sensitivity, and participants had explored the challenges of measuring the understanding and grasp of students in relation to sustainability. The discussion groups called for a survey of 'sustainability skills': this would include technical/scientific and political/cultural matters. However, while the assessment of traditional disciplinary expertise could be taken as read, there was concern over the disaggregation of student assessment into discrete units. The demise of the old viva voce examination combined with the limitations of a modular course structure appeared to limit (even eliminate) opportunities for a student to be challenged on their understanding of the implications of the whole programme of study: it appeared that

opportunities for imaginative assessment remained to be grasped. Participants had argued firmly that sustainability required overall enquiry into student understanding, with the development of graduate attributes that would include sensitivity to sustainability, in terms of both environmental issues and the ethos of global citizenship, as the two were held to be inextricably linked. Student participants insisted on the importance not only of placements but also of volunteering and of campus activities that promote informal learning. One group raised the question of whether the training volunteers receive (e.g., those at Prestongrange) could be formally accredited.

To take the measure of such issues, it was emphasised that degree programmes ought to rise above concentration on a single discipline. An appreciation of various sustainability issues could be acquired through mastery of a wide range of disciplines, but sustainability transcended the reach of single disciplines. There was the sense that the conundrum *might* be more approachable within the Scottish four-year honours degree than in the three-year English UG curriculum (especially were there to be further linkage between secondary educational provision and HE, e.g, through the *Curriculum for Excellence*). Yet, interestingly, a number of the discussion groups pointed to the success of PG Masters level programmes in harnessing the promise of interdisciplinarity. However embodied in terms of the formal curriculum, it was noted that academic strategies must be “holistic”, including both student knowledge and student experience.

iii. Communities, Markets and Drivers

The communities within which students, ex-students, faculty and HE institutions operate were explored during the discussions, in their varied forms and at many levels. It was thought that at each level, from the strictly local, through the regional and national, to the international and global, there is growing demand for both expertise in, and sensitivity to, sustainability issues. The discussion groups noted that this is true in both private and public sectors, which led to the suggestion that HE must reach out beyond those traditionally conceived to be its stakeholders. Participants queried whether HE institutions truly “appreciated their obligation to promote sustainability” (again, referring to the need for stronger leadership from the HE sector). Equally, groups thought that more should be done to create “forums of exchange”, bringing together interested parties, community demands for expertise and understanding, and the supply of those qualities among students and staff across HE. Added to this was the need to “connect” with what is being done outside HE. One group thought that there was “too much lip service” to sustainability within HE institutions; further discussion among them might serve to reassure backsliders that commitments to promoting sustainability in all its myriad forms do not compromise the academic mission.

The groups noted the range of drivers promoting consideration of sustainability issues within HE: global inter-governmental agreements provided drivers at one level, national regulatory frameworks at another. Enterprises (HEIs amongst them) were concerned with maximising efficiencies within such regulatory frameworks. Different interest groups within HE institutions were mentioned: these included standard-bearing disciplines, individual proponents offering innovative courses, and the local members of the Environmental Association of Universities

and Colleges (EAUC) – and, crucially, students themselves. The relationship between sustainability and enterprise and innovation remains unclear, though the discussions were very clear about the importance of embracing this dynamic, not least in providing a response to economic depression that is not based on old cultures and practices. One group noted that the language used by employers is very different from that used by academia (students and academics alike). The “skills shortage” was commented upon by several groups: yet it was not apparent that the exact nature of skills needs in relation to sustainability are sufficiently known to HE careers services, and through this channel, to those responsible for the construction and assessment of academic programmes⁶.

iv. Sustainability, HE and the Educational Spectrum

HE is not alone in addressing issues of sustainability, which increasingly permeate both primary and secondary education. Students entering HE in future years will, therefore, have greater experience in grappling with these issues and in working within institutions geared towards sustainability thought and practice. They will, therefore, bring particular expectations to their encounter with HE and its institutions. Equally, HE has a responsibility to help shape the whole educational experience, including lifelong and adult learning. It was noted that adult learning opportunities are supposed to be part of the critical framework that HE provides for public debate and understanding – that HE involvement is crucial in the creation of an informed public. Questions were also posed about the degree to which initial teacher education programmes (UG and PG Certificate in Education) are attuned to sustainability issues, as this is one of the most crucial vehicles through which HE has its impact on society in general.

An appreciation of sustainability issues requires of students that they should be “open to change”; critical and analytical thinkers; able to marshal information, to produce a synthesis, a logical argument and a conclusion. They should be proficient communicators, confident in their ability to influence the opinions and conduct of others, and able to be “self-reflective”, taking into account differing values and priorities without arrogance or dominance. Addressing these issues requires the stimulation of qualities that are quintessentially those nurtured in HE, yet one group queried whether students were realizing their full potential. The question was framed: “Does learning lead to action”? Any audit of involvement in sustainability would have to proceed with a very catholic understanding of ‘action’: not least, much crucial work remains to be done analysing how employers use graduate skills and understanding of sustainability issues. But, in one sense, learning might lead directly to action: students as employees would provoke their employers to adopt more sustainable practices. One of the discussion groups noted that attention to sustainability, and to the public need for ESD, might encourage more

⁶ For example, the Academy for Sustainable Communities report, *Mind the Skills Gap: The Skills We Need for Sustainable Communities* (2007) (available at: <http://www.hcaacademy.co.uk/whatwedo/mind-the-skills-gap-research>), and the United Nations Environment Report, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World* (2008) (available at: http://www.unep.org/labour_environment/features/greenjobs.asp), have forecast serious capacity problems in the professions required to build sustainable communities and in key areas such as renewables, energy efficient construction, sustainable transportation and organic agriculture. However, many other areas of academic and professional education require greater support in bridging the gap to better understand the links between the sustainability agenda and their projected skills needs.

intellectually and socially beneficial links and routes from other educational institutions into HE. Campuses need to be more 'open', yet, at the same time, put their human resources to best use.

v. Closing Remarks from Participants

Four participants gave pithy and acute summaries of their concerns at the conclusion of the day. Hilda Zara, a research student at the UHI PolicyWeb Institute, drew attention to how important it had been to involve upcoming research students in the day. She also highlighted the need for a broad sense of sustainability, involving human and social sciences, as well as the broad range of scientific and environmental disciplines. Her point was reinforced by Callum MacLeod of the Centre for Remote and Rural Studies at UHI: the cultural dimension to sustainability had to be maintained even at a time of great financial stringency. He urged, too, continuing attempts to break down any insularity between academia, communities and employers, and a critical questioning of whether HEIs were putting good sustainability practice in place or simply good rhetoric.

Malcolm McRobert, director of the consultancy company Sustainability Insight, returned to the theme of leadership, and the need to find examples from the tertiary sector of how to make good practice commercially performative and viable. He cautioned that HE was in danger of finding itself marginalized if it continued its 'piecemeal' approach, and if senior management failed to give the lead expected by their academic authority and institutional position. It might fall to FE to take the lead: FE was more in tune with local communities – and its programmes perhaps more 'manageable' and responsive, more demand-led, than those in HE. HE autonomy operated at two levels – the institutional and the departmental/individual, but neither was conducive to the national strategic approach which the sustainability agenda requires. Paul Cortopassi, of Eco-Schools Scotland, echoed these concerns about HE leadership, pointing to accomplishments at secondary level where pupils are exposed to environmental issues at all stages in the curriculum and sustainable design is woven into technical education. He urged HE to come to terms with the implications of change in the school sector and its approach to helping to create more sustainable communities.

5. Concluding Comments

At the close of this event, it was striking that during the second half of the DESD there is still an urgent need to continue to bring people together: secondary education, FE and HE; communities and private sector employers; students on different programmes and from different institutions. There is also the need to work more fluidly and swiftly towards understanding of, and sensitivity to, sustainability as an underpinning principle of HE experience and programmes. The following specific issues are worthy of particular attention as headline points:

1. Leadership in HE was being called into question, but was discussed extensively and with some urgency; it is clearly more necessary than ever. In the face of national and international demand and student interest, HE cannot retreat into a recitation of piecemeal initiatives, a culture of specialisation, and disaggregation of the university experience in an audit-driven climate. HE will need to adopt

sustainability as a key to innovation and to the delivery of its core values, and in the present economic climate, developing a culture of enterprise in this area may prove to be even more essential.

2. There was evidence of insufficient interchange in the relationship between academic faculty – who are most often responsible for organising placements – and careers staff – who are responsible for supporting students in seeking subsequent employment. It is possible that the majority of careers staff are not sufficiently aware of placement opportunities, nor enabled to become more actively involved in supporting academic staff in the development of work-related learning experiences. A similar question was raised with respect to colleagues in educational development/teaching and learning units.
3. The value of placements was strongly evidenced, particularly in strategic efforts to enhance the ESD dimensions in graduate attributes and employability, and to generate mutually beneficial partnerships between HEIs and external organisations (which can also lead to further research and knowledge exchange activities). There is a need to manage expectations on all sides – students, academics and placement providers (the organisers had heard elsewhere of placement providers who had felt defensive in the face of student expertise). Further attention should be given to the role of HEIs themselves as providers of placement opportunities, not least in their Estates divisions.
4. There was perhaps less direct discussion of ‘employability’ within the groups than might have been expected, and it is possible that this could be linked to the uncertainties in many quarters about market demands. It might be that there is a need for greater engagement between HE and the business community, including the major graduate recruiters, to enable clearer articulation of the needs of employers regarding sustainability. It was also apparent that more understanding is needed in HE about placement work undertaken in secondary education by students entering HE – and the decrease in work-related learning and competence for HE students. Further research is warranted in this area, to generate greater understanding about competencies and skills⁷.
5. It seems fair to suggest that the needs of all varieties of employer for student skills in the area of sustainability (very broadly interpreted) will remain considerable for many years; this need for skilled labour ought to serve as an inducement for other HE programmes to offer placements. However, challenging questions remain about ‘scaling up’ placements and creating work-related learning opportunities that can reach more academic subjects, while also taking into account any concerns with ‘academic fit’ and the ability of academics to provide foundational knowledge, given the ongoing

⁷ For example: to compare subsequent employment rates (and levels of student and employer satisfaction) between placement and dissertation students. Arguably, different types of writing and critical skills are involved (e.g., an applied and reflective focus common to work-related assessments) – but both are necessary for effective sustainability competence. It would also be interesting to explore the degree to which placements awaken, reorient stereotypes, or confirm aspects of student career interests, and to investigate overall academic attainment in students engaged in ‘off-campus’ learning (a question that arises, for example, in the languages ‘year abroad’). It may be necessary, particularly in ESD, for HEIs to pay closer attention to the value of ‘off-campus’ learning experiences, for example, in managing professional relationships.

challenge of balance to create an appropriate curriculum. A constructive response from the disciplines (and the HE programmes to which those disciplines are geared) to the challenge of ESD is crucial.

6. Informed community engagement with sustainability necessitates the involvement of the full range of academic disciplines, but there appears to be less understanding about ways to communicate the value and place of the human sciences within sustainability initiatives and in tackling pressing social problems. This connects with the broader problem of locating funding for voluntary and community projects that articulate the importance of cultural and community sustainability, when perhaps the 'ecological' messages, and efforts towards resource efficiency, are the most vocal, tangible and graspable dimensions of sustainability.
7. It is important to note the connection between the regulatory context (as a key driver for ESD) and its reflection in local council activities, plus the role of councils in delivering on national investment in lifelong learning and in promoting heritage conservation. The relative deficit in charitable and academic funding for projects addressing community resilience and local conservation suggests that HEIs might do more to engage with councils to support 'joined-up' thinking in areas such as adult education and museums (i.e., not just in areas of environmental management within councils that have more pragmatic regulatory requirements). The case for extending lifelong learning opportunities in sustainability issues is a strong one and should be set out thoroughly.

SUGGESTED ACTION POINTS

1. The HE Academy, in co-operation with other public bodies in Scotland, should continue the series of meetings of which this event was one. There are clear indications of themes that merit further attention:
 - **ESD and Interdisciplinarity:** Sustainability understanding does not undercut disciplines; it is largely based on mastery of those disciplines – but it often requires transcendence of individual disciplines. There is a need to support colleagues in applying this principle in the variety of HE curricula and subject areas.
 - **ESD across the Educational Sectors:** It is extremely important to tie together secondary education, colleges/FE, HE, and lifelong learning, to map the thread of sustainability running through each sector, to see the progression of understanding at each level, and to take account of this in proposing changes.
 - **ESD and HEI Leadership:** It is equally important to tie together different aspects of HE institutions, as their infrastructure provides the context for informal and formal learning. In this area, the concerns and expertise of the EAUC become particularly relevant, and student participation in these discussions is crucial.
2. At national level, those planning phase 2 activities in Scotland's DESD should act imaginatively and decisively to bring groups from across the educational sector together with those outside it, to encourage

integration at key points of fruitful synthesis and strategic leverage. There is particularly urgent need for more discussion between HEIs and enterprises (including private and public sector organisations, and professional bodies with a stake in the development of HE curricula and the quality of graduate output).

The challenges of sustainability require from students and faculty the qualities characteristic of HE: adoption of a focused question, rational marshalling of evidence, and the presentation of cogent and persuasive results. HE is well placed to develop the momentum of ESD by the provision of information, expertise and people (staff and students), to employers and, crucially, to the public at large. The degree of innovation and leadership HE can bring to bear will be key to the realisation of its potential to educate for sustainability.

Appendix: Questions Posed for Group Discussion during the Seminar

QUESTIONS OF EMPLOYABILITY:

- What is the demand for, and supply of, 'sustainability skills'? Who wants 'sustainability literate' graduates? What are the drivers from inside and outside HEIs?
- What value are students and employers placing on sustainability skills? Are employers satisfied that students are sufficiently aware of sustainability issues – and vice versa?

QUESTIONS OF ENGAGEMENT:

- Do HEIs understand the learning needs of the public in grappling with sustainability? What conditions are necessary for productive relationships between HEIs and 'communities' in addressing issues related to sustainability?
- How can community engagement for sustainability be focused so that HEIs can engage more widely? Are the primary incentives and motivations financial or values-based?

QUESTIONS OF STRATEGY:

- Have HEIs got the balance right between encouraging individual initiatives and setting institution-wide strategies? How can HEIs develop the potential synergies between ESD, employability, public engagement and lifelong learning?
- Which kinds of learning interventions best assist the ideals of sustainable development? What modes of external engagement have the greatest impact in support of ESD?