

Response submitted online

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Environmental Governance Consultation
Environmental Regulations EU Exit Team
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
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Dear Environmental Regulations EU Exit Team,

Please find below our consultation response on the Environmental Principles and Governance Bill.

Consultation: Environmental Principles and Governance after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION FOR UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (EAUC):

Response on behalf of our Members (United Kingdom and Ireland)

About the EAUC

Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. That's our vision. We exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

The membership of the EAUC comprises higher and further educational institutions, with a combined budget of some £25 billion, responsible for educating over 2 million students supported by half a million staff.

We have regional and country chapters, with member institutions connected deeply with business, industry, health and civic bodies at local levels, with reach internationally via their research, innovation and student mobility.

We believe

- That UK and Irish education should be a global leader in sustainability
- That educational institutions have a responsibility as anchors in their communities to be agents of change
- That education has a unique opportunity to transform lives and communities
- That education is at the heart of global sustainability
- That every student should have access to sustainability education
- That education should reflect best practice in operational sustainability
- In being flexible and adaptable to find solutions for a resilient future
- In the value of international collaboration

Our values

- Pioneering - driving sustainability through innovation
- Independence - our own unique voice
- Collaboration - together we go further



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- Role Model - leading by example
- Empowering - supporting and inspiring our members

EAUC's Approach to the Inquiry

Post-16 education plays a crucial role in driving environmental changes – due to its privileged position in influencing the next generation, the geographical land mass that its institutions stretch across and the economic and social power that it wields. We have focused our response to the consultation on the need for the new independent statutory body to have the powers needed actually tackle environmental issues at their source rather than temporarily mitigating the symptoms – of which education is paramount. This is the only way to ensure long-term sustainable-growth that is fair and equitable for everyone.

Response to the consultation:

An independent statutory body of this nature must have real teeth. Environmental legislation needs proper enforcement to bring about the change so urgently needed, particularly in light of the instability that Brexit will bring. The UK has accepted a key role in delivering sustainable development and this requires regulative and legislative input to ensure transformative change to allow the UK to continue to take a leading environmental position on the world stage.

A statutory body must also connect ecology with economics; recognising that our society and economic system survives within an ecological one. It follows that the body should have the power to hold Government departments to account to ensure departmental spend within Government takes into account the 'triple bottom line' (social, environmental and financial) principles.

Very clear targets are needed, at staged intervals, to match the science of climate change and the immediacy of the issues that we need to address. Government must be legally held to account for their actions, or lack of them, and to demonstrate that sufficient funding is going into changing systems and to regulate the economic market.

Any principles underpinning policy must be fair and not disproportionately impact those less able to contribute. Awareness and education is key to ensuring public buy-in prior to the implementation of crucial policies such as 'polluter pays' and the 'precautionary principle', but ultimately legislation and enforcement of regulation is needed to bring those resistant to change into line.

The independent statutory body must be able to convey and enforce the notion that environmental planning cannot be a choice or a 'nice to have'. If we do not act now to implement change, we stand no chance in the great battle with climate change.

The role of post-16 education is under-valued in the process of embedding environmental principles into law. These principles need to be accompanied by education and skills to ensure the next generation of leaders and change agents understand them and their importance. Recognising the failure to date of some institutions/courses to deliver students into the workforce that are fit for a future with environmental principles as key tenets, we ask that Education for Sustainable Development is identified as an essential element of all curricula. We note that according to actuary tables a graduate may have as much of 60 years of life post-graduation. Ensuring that post 16 education empowers and enables students to understand and appreciate the importance of sustainable development is a precursor to ensuring fair and effective environmental governance and regulation. Furthermore there is a role for government to state its expectations of UK graduates in terms of graduate attributes – highlighting the distinctiveness of their higher education experience – in



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particular, that all graduates will appreciate the role and contribution of Sustainable Development and will be prepared through their skills, knowledge and attributes to contribute to a sustainable future.

We hope that the Government will consult with us to ensure education is embedded in this process. It is the only way change can be sustained.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Iain A. Patton'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC