

Response submitted online

<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/314/green-jobs/>



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Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

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Dear Environmental Audit Committee,

Please find below our response to the 'Green Jobs' Inquiry.

EAUC – The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education:

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

EAUC's Approach to the Inquiry

EAUC has provided information on the core questions of relevance below. We have provided in-depth information on the education and skills agenda and the green economy to various departments over the last few years, and have summarised information of use.

Response to the Inquiry:

3. What needs to be done to ensure that these skills and capacity are developed in time to meet our environmental targets?

There is a huge green skills deficit at the moment and this must be something urgently tackled. Government has largely recognised the issue, but there is a lack of tangible action.

There are two core issues here to remedy:

- 1) The current workforce (both employed and unemployed) must be upskilled and retrained where necessary.
- 2) We must make sure that the education sector, which is the skills pipeline to our workforce, is rapidly reviewed so that what is being taught is fit for future job roles.

Within both of these areas, there are again two issues to consider:

- What new skills/education is needed to fulfil completely new roles?
- What skills/education is needed to supplement ALL job roles, which will need to adapt to a low carbon world to make sure we meet our legislated Net Zero target?

Looking at both of these issues in turn, we have some suggested solutions.

What new skills/education are needed to fulfil completely new roles?

This needs a more co-ordinated and planned approach. We support the call from Aldersgate Group in their policy briefing '[Upskilling the UK workforce for the 21st century](#)' which should form a key area of collaboration on this topic. We also have a research report that would be of value to this discussion, titled '[Future Graduate Skills](#)'. The necessity here is to create a National Skills Committee that creates a National Low Carbon Skills Strategy, this would identify the new skills/education needed to deliver 'Green' jobs, and establish a plan on how to deliver this through the education system. This could form part of the work of the Green Jobs Taskforce, but must work much more closely with the education sector.

We have been disappointed by the lack of action on this agenda by the Department for Education, and while the Office for Students have been more receptive to discussion, there is a lack of action here as well. The education frameworks must be reviewed immediately, or a generation already affected by the pandemic will be further affected by having a defunct education. The Education and Skills Funding Agency must also review their offerings.

Universities and colleges are doing a lot to try to address some of these issues already, but there must be better coordination, particularly with the private sector to establish precisely what skills and education is needed. To ensure this is given the prioritisation and urgency required within the education sector and government; policy, regulation and funding are urgently needed. We would encourage the Environment Audit Committee to further discuss this issue with the [Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education](#) who are a well-placed coalition of education organisations to further this agenda.

We also reinforce the calls from Aldersgate Group in their '[Upskilling the UK workforce for the 21st century](#)' report, asking the Government to:

- Bring back mandatory carbon reporting for universities in England to boost carbon literacy and increase awareness of the issue across the university, by giving the Office for Students the mandate to do so.
- Increase apprenticeship levy funding, as the total number of apprenticeships across the UK has not yet recovered to pre-Apprenticeship Levy levels.
- Update and develop new qualifications to encourage retraining and lifelong learning through a joined up approach between private sector and government. This could increase the availability of short-term retraining courses, with clear pathways into employment as an incentive for workers.
- Publish a world-leading Education White Paper, matched by investment in skills ahead of COP26 to showcase the UK's achievements in driving a sustainable recovery by investing in social capital to tackle the levelling up challenge whilst helping us get to net zero.
- Provide local authorities with sustained funding and flexibility to identify areas well-suited to the development of low carbon industries and associated supply chains, as more than £100 billion of investment in local clean energy schemes could be generated through local authorities, supported by private capital and government investment. k Create a National Investment Bank to drive investment in complex and innovative projects such as hydrogen and Carbon Capture Storage.
- Establish a National Skills Commission to encourage the coordination of different government departments and work with businesses, local institutions, and the National Investment Bank to develop the updated National Skills Fund to be introduced in 2021.

What skills/education are needed to supplement ALL job roles, which will need to adapt to a low carbon world to make sure we meet out legislated Net Zero target?

This is a relatively easy fix, that we have been promoting for decades, and that is Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) must be incorporated into the curriculum. The [UNESCO definition](#) of ESD is: *“ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society.”*

QAA and Advance HE have recently [published updated guidance on ESD](#) being incorporated into the curriculum, this must be regulated on, and schools, colleges and universities should have a mandatory requirement to deliver this teaching. ESD has been incorporated in Scotland into the Lecturers Standards, Colleges Scotland's 5year plan and the Scottish Skills Curriculum for a number of years, so we need to catch up here. To enable teachers to deliver this, ESD must very urgently be incorporated into teaching qualifications, and current teachers should have additional training on this.

There must be a partnership with the OfS and the DfE to rapidly review the education frameworks. As outlined previously.

To support those already in work, there should be ESD training available for employees, as well as training on job-specific knowledge required for a low carbon world.

The key weakness in the skills agenda revolves around a lack of collaboration between those involved. If we look at economics for example, there is a real need for universities and colleges to connect their business and outreach teams with industry, to open up their incubation and innovation hubs to the community, to connect deeply with economic development teams and civic society. Local Enterprise Partnerships could have paved the way for this collaboration, but the current arrangement appears to be too weak around the local skills strategy, and as such further attention needs to be given to how to drive place-based and sector-based skills and education. There is also a lack of knowledge transfer to enable tertiary education to better

understand the skills required by graduates. Labour market intelligence is reportedly not readily available without a significant cost. Similarly, highly effective employer engagement is very resource intensive. All of which proves challenging. The Government should further address these issues through the National Skills Commissions.

You can find our relevant consultation responses on [‘Post-pandemic economic growth’ to BEIS here](#), and on [‘Post – 16 skills and funding’ to the DfE here](#).

For questions 5-9, we would encourage you to read a report from Aldersgate Group titled [‘Building a net zero emissions economy’](#) to find the answer to these questions.

If we can provide more information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC