

aset

Newsletter of Association of
Sandwich Education & Training

Volume One Number Three July 1983

Please address correspondence to:

The Editor Ken Hart
Employer Liaison Service
North East London Polytechnic
Longbridge Road
Dagenham
Essex RM8 2AS
Tel: 01 590 7722

Editor: Ken Hart
Editorial Assistant: Janet Harris

Comment

Securing the future

At a time when world-wide interest is being shown in co-operative education it is a tragedy that this country, a pioneer of the system, should be failing to secure its further development. Each of the previous World Conferences on Co-operative Education have seen an increase in the number of countries which have developed co-operative education in order to solve some of their manpower and economic problems. Instead of going back in time, or even standing still, we should be increasing the number of opportunities for our young people to complete their studies with a clearer understanding of how to usefully apply their knowledge.

One of the most encouraging conclusions from the 1981 review, conducted by the Scottish Tertiary Council, was that education should fund supervised work experience. The fact that this report received no further consideration will come as no surprise; and yet it could have solved, at no real extra cost, many of the problems which we now face.

continued on page 2

In this issue....

Melbourne Conference	2
Next World Conference	
NUS Survey	
Don McLaren Award	
Job via Placement	3
1st Year in Industry	
Sandwich versus Full-Time	

Education and Training in the 1980s	4
TIP/TOP	
PCSC	
Membership	

Sandwich Study

Government Review of Sandwich Courses

In the summer of 1982 at the request of Mr William Waldegrave, former Under Secretary of State for Education, the Department of Education and Science (DES) established a Steering Group to supervise research into the cost benefits of sandwich courses in relation to other forms of education. The establishment of this Steering Group would seem to take no account of the numerous reports, presented over a period of thirty years, which have confirmed, for Engineering at least, the value of integrating academic and practical training. The real problem, and the one the Steering Group should be addressing itself to, is how industry can continue to finance this or any other kind of training at a time when workforces are being reduced and profitability is being eroded.

The Steering Group is required to make its report towards the end of 1983; that report will be based on the findings of several surveys carried out by Brunel University and Manchester Polytechnic. The Manchester Polytechnic surveys have already been started, and the Brunel University surveys are scheduled to commence in June 1983. These surveys will concentrate on the value, at undergraduate level and in career terms, which employers and graduates place on the sandwich system.

The DES Steering Group includes representatives of employers of students and graduates from sandwich courses; institutions of higher education which offer sandwich courses; the Department of Employment and Industry; the Manpower Services Commission; and ASET. The Steering Group's Chairman, Mr D V Forrester of the DES has indicated that the principal task of the Steering Group is to identify any benefits that the sandwich system has, and, as precisely as possible, to establish in which areas sandwich courses are preferable to full-time study. The DES will itself determine the 'costs' of the system, and information on this aspect of sandwich study is not being sought via the Steering Group.

Clearly the responses of employers will play an important part in how the Government decides to finance sandwich courses in the future. Because of this the Brunel and Manchester surveys - via detailed question-

naires and structured interviews - have been designed after a great deal of consultation. As with all surveys of this kind industrial members of ASET may find themselves receiving requests for information from several directions. It is understood that the Brunel survey will, where possible, ask tutors in polytechnics and universities to make returns, and thereby reduce the burden on the central staff of large organisations. Clearly there will, however, need to be some degree of co-ordination, by these central staff, where general statements about company policy or commonality of purpose or experience are sought.

There is no doubt that it is becoming increasingly difficult for industry to continue to finance the training of students on sandwich courses. A conservative estimate puts the financial contribution of industry, in trainees' salaries alone, at well over £40 million a year. The DES, the Scottish Education Department, and the Manpower Services Commission are not proposing to allocate any more money to educational institutions to help them solve the problem of finding places for sandwich students. Unless the present government survey demonstrates very clear and positive evidence from employers of the importance they set on the sandwich system (the value of this system to the training of doctors is apparently not in question!) it must be assumed that institutions will be forced into operating fewer sandwich courses. +++

Scottish Partners

The Second Scottish Seminar was held at the Glasgow College of Technology in May. The theme was 'Industry and Education - a Partnership?'. Naturally sandwich education partnerships were highlighted, but, the speakers considered others, such as, research and consultancy; exchanges of staff; 'top-up' and specialised courses; hi-technology developments; continuing education, and, the fostering of entrepreneurship.

Sixty people attended the seminar, equally divided between representatives from educational institutions, industry and commerce. ASET's role of bringing all sides together and to represent their views to government

and other agencies in England and Wales should, it is felt be, extended to Scotland. Many of the points raised in discussion are applicable throughout the country. Delegates concluded that secondary schools need to be persuaded to 'sell' manufacturing industry as a career to its pupils; colleges and universities will have to put more effort into obtaining supervised work experience placement with smaller companies; educational institutions should 'teach' business awareness - entrepreneurs need to be nurtured; more engineers should seek top management roles; more co-operation between institutions, and, industry and commerce is required, especially exchanges of staff and in research and development projects +++

