

# aset

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for Sandwich Education & Training

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## Comment

At the recent AGM of the Association (held in London on 7th June 1988) the Chairman, Dr. Edwin Kerr, told members of the Executive Committee's plan to set up a development committee to draw up a business plan which the Association should follow. It was clearly felt that for ASET to play a 'leading' part in increasingly important national and international issues in industry and higher education collaboration the Association must have a forward looking strategy to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. ASET is already involved with and making contributions to: the national accreditation of sandwich courses and good practice criteria; the EEC for recognition as a UETP (university-enterprise training partnership); the MSC as a central 'underpinning' resource for the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative; as an employing agent offering a service to employers to enable them to take on sandwich students when headcount and related difficulties apply. Of major concern however and central to the development strategy will be a drive to increase the membership of the Association, particularly among employers. The plain fact of the matter is that with some 80,000 students on sandwich courses in the UK, producing a requirement of some 30,000 training placements, at a conservative estimate there must be 10,000 employers nationally that employ sandwich students - all potential members of ASET.

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## Sandwich Course Institutions Selected in the MSC's Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative

Of the twenty higher education institutions given the go-ahead by the Manpower Services Commission to prepare full proposals for participation in the MSC's Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative, fourteen run sandwich courses. The aim of the initiative is to help to develop more enterprising graduates, who are aware of the needs of industry and commerce, who have had some direct experience of the world of work and who will leave higher education better prepared for adult and working life. This reads exactly like the principle aim of sandwich courses which since the mid-1950's have provided for the effective integration of student and employer needs with the development of courses to meet not only the standard academic criteria but also provide undergraduates with extensive professional and practical experience. It should come as no surprise therefore that institutions well versed in the practice of operating sandwich courses should do well in making initial bids in the Higher Education Initiative.

Included in the short-list are ten polytechnics and two technological universities chosen from a total of eighty-five initial bids considered by the MSC's Higher Education Advisers in consultation with the Education Departments for England, Scotland and Wales. The Commission's National Advisory Committee on Higher Education, chaired by Sir James Munn - current Chairman of the MSC, will meet in June to select up to ten institutions which will be given the go-ahead to start in the autumn term 1988/89. The successful applicants could receive up to £200,000 a year over the next five years to encourage students to develop competence and aptitude relevant to enterprise.

Launching the "Enterprise in Higher Education" project in December 1987, Employment Secretary, Norman Fowler said: "This project is one of the most important we have yet launched in the course of our reform of education and training so as to make our provision second to none in the world - and training through life a reality".

Reviewing the Initiative Dr. George Tolley, Higher Education Adviser to the MSC, welcomed the enthusiastic response from higher education. He feels there is now a wider recognition that narrowly cognitive, discipline-based knowledge is not enough, either for effective performance in employment or for personal fulfilment. Also he adds that teaching methods are coming under increasing scrutiny. Effective learning, not just the provision of teaching, becomes the priority. He welcomes employers having a clear stake in the learning process and with more income having to come from outside of public funds, universities and polytechnics recognise that the Initiative represents the opportunity for new permanent relationships with outside organisations.



Sir James Munn OBE

The Initiative will mean that there will be much more opportunity for supervised work experience for students, running across all faculties and involving a much wider range of employing organisations than is currently the case. Projects undertaken in employment will become more widespread and will be assessed, usually jointly with employers, as a required part of the degree.

Twenty institutions selected to submit full submissions are:

Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology, Aberdeen  
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh  
University of Glasgow  
Newcastle on Tyne Polytechnic  
Durham University  
University of Bradford  
Trinity & All Saints College, Leeds  
University of Salford  
Chester College  
Manchester Polytechnic  
University of Lancaster  
Polytechnic of Wolverhampton  
Coventry Polytechnic  
Trent Polytechnic  
Polytechnic of Wales  
Bristol Polytechnic  
Hatfield Polytechnic  
Middlesex Polytechnic  
Birkbeck College, London  
Eastern Region Teacher Education Consortium (which includes Hatfield Polytechnic).

As from 26th May 1988 the Manpower Services Commission will be known as the Training Commission. Ed.

