



## **Response to - Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice**

### **Department for Business Innovation and Skills**

As the National body supporting and enabling the development of a heritage focused research infrastructure to underpin the preservation of the material base on which the UK heritage tourism industry is built, NHSF welcomes a white paper concerned with the education of next generation researchers and the organisation of research funding. The applied and contextual nature of heritage science research sits well with the white paper goals of multi and inter-disciplinary approaches to research and innovation. Building a single UKRI structure to co-ordinate cross disciplinary research suits heritage science, where sector specific impact often takes the form of contextual evidence based management and practitioner guidelines that require multi-partner and inter-disciplinary collaboration. We support the intention to retain the best structural elements currently existing in the research and innovation funding such as peer review and assessment of impact, while seeking to reduce bureaucracy as outlined by Sir Paul Nurse. Linking research to economic impacts is essential for future prosperity and fits well with NHSF working to maintain and improve the heritage experience for UK citizens and tourists through research and application of science in heritage practice. We welcome a system that facilitates opportunity to gain grant aid to deliver economy focused outcomes.

Sector embedded training via degree apprenticeships sits well with the education of heritage focused scientists but challenges arise for establishing them within the mainly public and private funded heritage sector. Development of graduate soft skills and degree relevance to the employment sector will serve the needs of multi-disciplinary sectors such as Heritage Science (for example, the EPSRC funded Centre for Doctoral Training in Science and Engineering in Arts Heritage and Archaeology). While ensuring that quality is the measure of UK university educational standards and outputs, there is an element of concern regarding the use of metrics and the resources their generation will consume. In a structure with finite resources, new measurement systems will naturally require reassignment of existing resources, leading to a concern that institutional allocations of time and money, currently supporting research, will be used to meet TEF criteria. This has potential to conflict with the research objectives set out in the document. What metrics measure in terms of quality must be clearly evidenced. Whether a National Student Survey is a measure of teaching quality is debatable but it is clear that the student concerns should be addressed within an informed context. Assessing quality is a complex dynamic; for instance, the inference that contact hours as a numeric can be related to degree quality is not a reasonable connection.

NHSF welcomes change and development within the education sector to meet the needs of our evolving society and the demands of the world stage. This requires a careful balance between business principles and educational goals to meet the challenges ahead, which the current paper seeks to address.

## National Heritage Science Forum

4 July 2016

### Notes:

The National Heritage Science Forum was set up to address the recommendations of the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee Inquiry on Science and Heritage and to implement the objectives of the National Heritage Science Strategy.

<http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk/strategy.php>

The Forum brings together 21 leading academic and heritage organisations that are active in the field of heritage science research. It provides a platform to support the policy, research and professional needs of institutions engaged in heritage science.

[www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk](http://www.heritagescienceforum.org.uk)

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