

11<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Dear Vice-Chancellor or Principal,

Cogent is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, Oil and Gas, Nuclear, Petroleum and Polymer Industries. We are licensed by the UK Government to meet the skills needs of employers based within these industries.

Driven by industry, Cogent has grown steadily, and now presents a clear and powerful voice, enabling sector employers and education providers to work together to influence Government policy, whilst developing and shaping industry relevant training that enhances business performance, innovation, sustainability and productivity.

Working directly with Higher Education on a number of programmes, we have been made acutely aware of the need to improve the funding mechanisms available to both employers, their employees, and for the providers of education and training.

As such, we welcome the availability of HEFCE funding for Additional Student Numbers (ASNs) which enable the delivery of flexible pathways through education for those wishing to enter employment, and those already in employment, in the Cogent sectors.

Following on from the release of Technically Higher<sup>1</sup>, our Higher Level Skills Strategy, we are keen to engage and offer support to employers and their employees by increasing higher level skills provision that enables:

- A reduction in the sector's skills gaps and shortages<sup>2</sup> and anticipate future needs in the Cogent industries for graduate level students
- Improvements in productivity and business performance through specific strategic actions, based on our analysis of sectoral priorities
- Increased opportunities to develop the productivity of the sector's workforce through the greater employability
- Improvements in learning supply, including the development of internships, higher education and of national occupational standards
- Developing Industry-Relevant Skills Training for our industries, in particular, through "Gold Standard" skills and training
- Fostering relationships with our employers for greater impact of the programmes

Following the call from HEFCE for Employer Co-funded ASNs for 2010-11<sup>3</sup>, Cogent seeks to review and support suitable applications from providers that meet our sector needs. In particular, Cogent would be willing to review and consider any submissions relating to the following areas:

- Low Carbon (Nuclear, Oil and Gas, Chemicals)
- Life Sciences (Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals)
- Advanced Manufacturing (Industrial Biotechnology, Chemicals, and Polymers)

Cogent industries also have a preference for short post-graduate level provision, to meet the need for continual professional development in these emerging technology markets.

For more information, please contact either:

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Yours sincerely,



Dr Caroline Sudworth  
Science and Higher Level Skills Development Manager

<sup>1</sup> Technically Higher: [http://www.cogent-ssc.com/Higher\\_level\\_skills/HE\\_Strategy.php](http://www.cogent-ssc.com/Higher_level_skills/HE_Strategy.php)

<sup>2</sup> Skills Research: <http://www.cogent-ssc.com/research/index.php>

<sup>3</sup> HEFCE ASN Call: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlets/2010/cl03\\_10/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/circlets/2010/cl03_10/)

