

**Ideas for Excellence getting Lost in Translation**

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) strongly supports the aims and aspirations of the Curriculum for Excellence. As an independent and politically neutral body, the RSE is heartened by the cross-party support for Curriculum for Excellence, which is a great strength and provides an excellent basis for what the RSE hopes will remain a consensual process that benefits the education of our children.

In its response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Curriculum, the RSE expressed its support for the broadly-defined "learning outcomes". The RSE's Curriculum for Excellence Working Party is concerned, however, that these cannot readily be translated into the form of a curriculum that gives teachers, parents, employers and other stakeholders a clear view of how the objectives of the curriculum can be translated into reality and how it will achieve excellence.

The RSE is also concerned that the proposed curriculum fails to pay enough attention to the fundamental 'building blocks' that make up subject disciplines such as *skills, methods, and knowledge*. The RSE has told the Scottish Government that current plans lack clarity about criteria and details of assessment.

The General Secretary of The Royal Society of Edinburgh, Professor Geoffrey Boulton commented:

*The objectives of the Curriculum for Excellence are entirely laudable but we are sympathetic to the concerns that many have expressed about the elusive nature of the curriculum idea. We are aware of the frustration of teachers who will be called upon to engage with and implement the curriculum.*

With the intention of supporting the development of the Curriculum, the RSE is discussing with subject groups and teachers how exemplars of the Curriculum for Excellence could be created for different subject areas. The purpose would be to demonstrate how its principles can be embedded in a curriculum structure whilst not undermining the potential for teachers to exercise their professional creativity in delivering it.

**Notes for Editors:**

**The RSE's Consultation Response on Curriculum for Excellence**

is available [here](#)

Copies can also be requested from the RSE's Consultations Officer, Mr. William Hardie (email: [evidenceadvice@royalsoced.org.uk](mailto:evidenceadvice@royalsoced.org.uk)).

**About the RSE**

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) is an educational charity, registered in Scotland.

Independent and non-party-political, our wide-ranging educational activities include:

- Organising lectures, debates and conferences
- Conducting major independent inquiries
- Providing educational activities for school students throughout Scotland
- Distributing over £2 million to top researchers and entrepreneurs
- Showcasing to the World the best of our research and development
- Increasing two-way international exchanges
- Encouraging, promoting and rewarding excellence
- Offering state-of-the-art conference facilities
- Publishing internationally respected learned journals

The RSE was founded in 1783 by Royal Charter for the “Advancement of Learning and Useful Knowledge”. It is regarded as Scotland’s National Academy of Science and Letters. Today it has around 1400 Fellows whose expertise encompasses the full spectrum of the sciences, medicine, engineering and technology, education, law, the arts, humanities, social sciences, business, industry, the professions and public service. This multi-disciplinary perspective makes the RSE unique amongst the United Kingdom’s learned societies. It is funded by a range of carefully selected charitable, public and private bodies. Its mission today is providing public benefit through the advancement of learning and useful knowledge.

The Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland’s National Academy, is Scottish Charity No. SC000470.

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