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CaSE PR 07/01

Welcome breakthrough in debate about funding breakthroughs

Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) today welcomed a report that admitted current funding mechanisms do not tend to support significant scientific breakthroughs.

Responding to a report from the Higher Education Funding Council for England, CaSE's Director, Dr Peter Cotgreave said "HEFCE admits that there is no evidence that its funding was 'supporting research which has led to fundamental breakthroughs or radical changes in research areas'.

"This is what we have been saying for years. Although there is a huge amount of excellent research going on in British universities, it remains almost impossible for scientists and engineers to get the funding needed to do really exciting new projects, which might change the shape of their subject.

"Albert Einstein, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin or Marie Curie would apply in vain for a grant if they had to work in the UK university system of today, and today's report admits as much."

CaSE believes this kind of research is important for a number of reasons, one of which is the generation of really new ideas on which new technologies can be built.

"There is a debate in Parliament today about the Government's policies on innovation," said Peter Cotgreave, "and one thing ministers should be doing is dealing with this lack of funding for innovative research."

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