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## **CaSE anxious at UCAS application figures**

Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) was concerned at some of the UCAS application figures released today. The total number of applications increased but CaSE was alarmed by some apparent changes in the pattern of student preference.

This year students were only able to indicate up to five subject choices, rather than six last year, and this yielded an overall fall of 9.4% across all subjects. (All data must be interpreted with some caution as we do not know how individuals rate the different subjects within their choices.)

The greatest area of concern is the large fall of 16.2% in pharmacology, toxicology and pharmacy and of a huge 29.8% in anatomy, physiology and pathology.

Nick Dusic said: "The bioscience and pharmaceutical sector is one of the biggest employers of science-based graduates in the UK and a massive contributor to the economy. A recent SEMTA report found that this sector was experiencing severe skills shortages, with 39% of bioscience and pharmaceutical companies failing to fill key posts. It is critical that we attract young scientists into these important areas."

CaSE is also concerned at the higher fall in physics of 14.5%. Nick Dusic, Director of CaSE, commented: "We were worried that something like this would happen following the £80 million shortfall in the Science and Technology Facilities Council budget. Students may be put off picking physics and astronomy, despite the wonderful opportunities that they open up, because they don't trust the Government to provide enough funding in the future. Fortunately the STFC has announced a temporary reprieve on implementing cuts and we urge the Government to find a long term solution."

In other core science subjects, there was a fall of just 6.7% in mathematics, suggesting a shift of student preference towards this subject which we will celebrate in due course if this results in more actual enrolments. The falls of 11.4% in biology and 10.5% in chemistry were disappointing, being higher than the overall rate, and we can only hope that this does not result in fewer students studying these important subjects.

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Notes to Editors

1. For further information, please contact Nick Dusic, Director of the Campaign for Science & Engineering, on 07749 953041.
2. The Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) is a pressure group aiming to improve the scientific and engineering health of the UK. Our objective is to communicate to Parliament and

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Campaign for  
Science and  
Engineering  
in the UK



the nation as a whole the economic and cultural importance of science and engineering, and the vital need for its funding by government and industry. CaSE is supported by its members, which includes individuals, corporations, universities and learned societies. Further information on CaSE can be found at:

<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk>

3. Information on the UCAS announcement can be found at:

[http://www.ucas.ac.uk/website/news/media\\_releases/2008/2008-02-14](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/website/news/media_releases/2008/2008-02-14)

4. The SEMTA report is:

[http://www.semta.org.uk/about\\_us/media\\_centre/news/uk\\_bio\\_industry\\_research.aspx](http://www.semta.org.uk/about_us/media_centre/news/uk_bio_industry_research.aspx)

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