

Key Commitments from Labour – Election 2010

Research Base

Commitments in the Labour response to the CaSE election letter:

- We will continue to support curiosity driven research which has underpinned the breadth and excellence of UK science over the last ten years.
- In setting research priorities, we respect the Haldane principle. Peer review, the judgements of the science community and the independence of the research councils are all key.
- Through changes in the new Research Excellence Framework we will do more to incentivise universities to broaden and deepen their links with business and other users of research and to think further about the impact they generate.
- We will improve early stage commercialisation of promising innovations from universities through a £35 million University Enterprise Capital Fund.
- We remain committed to the £250 million investment for a world-class medical research centre at St Pancras in London.

Commitments in Labour's Plan for Science:

- Grants will remain with the Science and Technology Facilities Council to deliver investment continuity. We will remove the risk of foreign exchange impacts and put the STFC on a sound footing.
- We will apply the principle of publication of publicly funded research if it passes peer review.

Commitments in the Labour Election Manifesto:

- Committed to a ring-fenced science budget in the next spending review

Education & Skills

Commitments in the Labour response to the CaSE election letter:

- We will continue to take action to recruit bright qualified science teachers.

Commitments in Labour's Plan for Science:

- More young people will be able to study single science subjects and modern foreign languages.
- We will provide greater maths content in GCSE science and require science A levels to have greater stretch and challenge.
- Fund more STEM-subject students in higher education, with an additional 20,000 places at university and college this year, bringing the total to around 410,000 new undergraduate entrants to HE in 2010/11.
- 27,000 science and engineering ambassadors by 2011.
- We will move to fund "excellent individuals" alongside "excellent research" in long-term fellowships via the Research Councils.

- We will ensure sandwich courses are available at universities so that science and engineering graduates get the necessary work experience – especially with businesses benefiting from R&D tax credits – to make the transition into STEM related careers following their studies.
- Set a new ambition that 75 per cent of young people go into higher education or complete an advanced apprenticeship or equivalent technician training by the age of 30. This will help create a new ‘technician class’ equipped with the advanced (level 3) skills needed in many businesses. We will fund up to 70,000 new advanced apprenticeships in the next two years.
- We will develop a registration system for engineers and proposals to introduce a parallel scheme for science technicians that will make this new technician status a reality.
- We will work with industry to identify STEM skill gaps in sectors which we expect to grow in the next twenty years.

Commitments in the Labour Election Manifesto:

- Parents will be given a ‘3Rs Guarantee’ that every pupil who falls behind at primary school and early in secondary school will receive special one-to-one or small-group catch-up provision. This will include up to 40,000 six and seven year olds benefiting from extra tuition in English and Maths through ‘Every Child a Reader’ and ‘Every Child Counts’, and 300,000 receiving ten hours of one-to-one tuition in both English and Maths when they are older.
- Our aim is to continue the expansion of higher education, widening access still further, while ensuring that universities and colleges have a secure, long-term funding base that protects world-class standards in teaching and research.
- In the coming years, priority in the expansion of student places will be given to science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees.

Innovation and Industry

Commitments in the Labour response to the CaSE election letter:

- New Technology and Innovation Centres will research, prove and develop technologies where the UK has world leading strength.

Commitments in Labour’s Plan for Science:

- We have no plans to remove the eligibility criteria from larger firms for R&D tax credits as we want as many businesses as possible to benefit.
- From April 2013, the Patent Box will apply a 10 per cent rate of corporation tax to income received from UK patents to ensure the UK remains an attractive location for innovation and the manufacture of patented products here in this country. We will consult with business in the coming months on the precise design of the patent box.
- We will deliver a £1 billion programme of investment in innovation by April next year through the Technology Strategy Board working in partnership with others, to develop and commercialise key technologies.
- We will review the remit of the TSB and building on the success of the TSB’s innovation platforms we will align science and innovation with global challenge programmes by defining further societal challenges which we know we must overcome as a nation.
- The UK Innovation Investment Fund is up and running with £325 million to drive economic growth by backing the next generation of technology based entrepreneurs.

- We will use our influence in Europe to raise up to three billion euros of venture capital and loans for SMEs through mobilising the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund.

Commitments in the Labour Election Manifesto:

- Protect and increase the size of capital allowances that help to grow key sectors such as manufacturing.
- Develop a new gateway for the export of NHS intellectual property and cutting-edge services.

Commitments Elsewhere:

- Commit public funding to ensure existing broadband reaches nearly every household by 2012

Science & Engineering in Government & Society

Commitments in the Labour response to the CaSE election letter:

- To encourage freedom of speech and access to information, we will bring forward new legislation on libel to protect the right of defendants to speak freely.

Commitments in Labour's Plan for Science:

- We will appoint a Chief Technology Officer to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.
- We will consult with Science and Society expert groups on what steps we need to take to improve public awareness of science including options to strengthen science reporting.

Commitments Elsewhere

- Retain Science Minister's seat in cabinet
(Source: CaSE Policy Debate, January 2010)
- Incorporate principles of Scientific Advice into Ministerial Code when it is updated after the election
(Source: RSC Policy Debate, March 2010)
- Appoint a Minister for Life Sciences
(Source: BIS, March 2010)