

What the Party Leaders have to say on science and engineering

8th April 2015

The political parties have today set out how they would support science and engineering if they are put into power in the General Election on May 7th.

The commitments are set out in letters to CaSE, which wrote to the leader of every political party with at least one MP in Westminster, sending them our election briefings and asking them how they will support science and engineering in the next Parliament.

CaSE Acting Director, Naomi Weir, said:

"Science and engineering may not take centre stage in this election but backing science and engineering is essential for driving the economy, creating jobs and combating future challenges posed by disease, disaster or demographics. Indeed in these letters the party leaders discuss the health service, immigration, education, jobs, the EU, dealing with the deficit and growing the national economy. These are the reasons the next government must back science and engineering."

In his response, David Cameron said that a Conservative government would focus on investing in infrastructure and research, encouraging innovation and nurturing engineering talent. Ed Miliband said that science and engineering have a central role to play in Labour's plan to raise living standards, create more high skill, high wage jobs, and deliver a world-class NHS that supports the needs of an ageing society.

In his response, Nick Clegg promised to continue to ringfence the science budget and ensure that, by 2020, both capital and revenue spending have increased at least in line with inflation.

The Green Party declared its intention to double public spending on research over the next ten years to reach 1% of GDP, with a focus on adequately funded basic research. The UK Independence Party have pledged to abolish tuition fees for STEM degrees for students who work within the UK for the following five years after graduating.

Responding on behalf of the Scottish National Party, the Office of the Scottish Chief Scientific Advisor said that science and engineering is key to achieving the overall goal of creating a more successful Scotland and that they are committed to positioning Scotland as a nation of innovation.

In Wales, Plaid Cymru would press for Welsh universities to get more UK-based research funding and would provide a subsidy to students resident in Wales who wish to study in Wales, while the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland would increase investment in science and research through the UK Research Councils.

The full responses can be found [here](#). CaSE will also be publishing full analysis of all the political party's commitments and statements on science and engineering when the election manifestos are published in early April.

On our election work, you can also read our election briefings and our guest articles from Prospective Parliamentary Candidates .