

## Training the Energy Researchers of the Future

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A new £3m venture will help the next generation of scientists and engineers meet the biggest challenges of the 21st century.

The Midlands Energy Graduate School (MEGS) – a collaboration between the Universities of Nottingham, Loughborough and Birmingham – will produce highly-trained postgraduates in renewable energy, power generation and carbon capture, hydrogen and fuel cells, sustainable building, energy efficiency and many other areas crucial to the low carbon economy of the future.

Responding to unprecedented climate change and the need for more secure energy supply, MEGS will train significant numbers of postgraduate researchers to help satisfy the increasing national demand for leading academics and industrialists in the low-carbon energy sector. Its graduates will make a major contribution to addressing the skills gap, combining specialist knowledge of energy technologies with highly-developed engineering skills to put solutions into practice.

The School had its official launch at the East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham, on October 6.

MEGS will be run by the Midlands Energy Consortium, a flagship collaboration between the three universities formed in 2007 to bring together the cutting-edge energy research of more than 200 academics taking place at Birmingham, Loughborough and Nottingham.

Professor Colin Snape of The University of Nottingham, Director of MEGS, said: “The school will provide an unrivalled concentration of energy-related research and development within the UK, and will significantly increase the number of postgraduates in low-carbon technologies to match the clear market demand. They will be thoroughly versed in cutting-edge fossil energy research, capable of operating in multi-disciplinary teams across a range of roles, and skilled to analyse the overall economic and social context of their projects.”

Professor Shirley Pearce, Vice-Chancellor of Loughborough University, said: “The Midlands Energy Graduate School is an exciting initiative that will bring a new level of collaboration to doctoral training in energy. It will provide students at the three consortium universities with an exceptional opportunity to broaden their understanding of energy technologies by drawing upon the expertise of some of the country’s leading specialists in their field.”

Modules will be delivered across the three institutions via a video-conferencing facility and there will also be summer school/networking activities, collaborative MSc programmes and an annual energy focused recruitment fair for undergraduates to attract them to work in the energy sector.

Professor Richard Green, of The University of Birmingham, will lead a module on the overview of the energy system in the UK, from a technical and a socio-economic point of view. He said: “I am delighted to be involved in the Midlands Energy Graduate School – teaching by video-link is an excellent low-carbon way to share our expertise across the three universities, and give all of our research students a broader experience and better foundation for their future careers. Our three universities complement each other very well in energy research, and this is a way of maximising our collective impact.”

Core funding of £3m for MEGS was awarded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The School takes its first students in October 2009. Over the next five years, 150 new PhD students will benefit from the enhanced training within themed doctoral training centres in the areas of:

- Efficient Fossil Energy Technologies
- Hydrogen, Fuel Cells and Applications
- Energy Demand Reduction and the Built Environment

The Midlands Energy Consortium has already had significant success – winning the national competition to host the £1bn Energy Technologies Institute, a UK-based company formed from global industries and the UK government.

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