



House of Commons

Innovation, Universities & Skills
Committee

**The Last Report:
Government Response
to the Science and
Technology Committee's
Thirteenth Report of
Session 2006–07**

**Second Special Report of Session
2007–08**

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The Innovation, Universities & Skills Committee

The Innovation, Universities & Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

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The Committee is one of the departmental Select Committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No.152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/ius

A list of reports from the Committee in this Parliament is included at the back of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are: Dr Lynn Gardner (Clerk); Glenn McKee (Second Clerk); Ed Waller (Second Clerk); Dr Christopher Tyler (Committee Specialist); Dr Joanna Dally (Committee Specialist); Ana Ferreira (Committee Assistant); Camilla Brace (Committee Secretary); and Jonathan Olivier Wright (Senior Office Clerk).

Contacts

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Second Special Report

1. The Committee has received the Government's response to the *Last Report* from the Science and Technology Committee (Thirteenth Report, Session 2006-07, HC 1108). The response, submitted in the form of a memorandum, is attached to this short Report.
2. In the *Last Report*, the Science and Technology Committee expressed disappointment at the exclusion of "science" from the title of the new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and recommended that this omission be rectified. The Committee also recommended that the name of the Innovation, Universities and Skills Committee which replaced it should be similarly altered.
3. The Government response rejects the first recommendation on the ground that changing the name of the Department after six months "would not represent an acceptable use of public funds".¹ However, it goes on to state that the Government is willing to table a motion to allow the change in name of our own Committee if we so wish. This is indeed the case and we look forward to the Government enabling the House of Commons to decide on a motion to include "Science" in our title at the first available opportunity

Appendix: Government response

The Government is pleased to respond to those recommendations addressed to it in the House of Commons Science & Technology Select Committee's 'Last Report'.

Inclusion of science in titles

Recommendation 1. We urge the Government to change the title of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills to include the word 'science' to reflect the importance of science within Government. (Paragraph 5)

The Government recognises the desire of the committee to see the role of Science in the title of the department. However the Government feels that a change of name after 6 months would not represent an acceptable use of public funds. The Government is deeply committed to promoting the role of science and it plays a central role in the new department, and has featured strongly in the recent Comprehensive Spending Review; over the CSR07 period spending on the public science base will rise by an annual average rate of 2.5 per cent in real terms to £6.3 billion by 2010-11.

Recommendation 2. In order to reflect accurately the remit of the new committee, we recommend that the Leader of the House bring forward Standing Order changes to change the name of the Innovation, Universities and Skills Select Committee to include the word 'science'. (Paragraph 7)

In respect of the nomenclature of the Committee, the Government recognises that there has not always been a precise match between departmental names and committee names. While it clearly would not be helpful in maintaining the clarity of the departmentally-

¹ See response published below.

related committee structure if significant divergences were to emerge, there may be a particular case for highlighting the significance of science issues within the IUS Committee's activities. The Government would be willing to table the necessary motion if the Innovation, Universities and Skills Committee were to indicate that it supports the request.

Future science scrutiny in the Commons

Recommendation 9. We believe that in the long term a separate Science and Technology Committee is the only way to guarantee a permanent focus on science across Government within the select committee system. We recommend that the House be given an opportunity to revisit the question of science scrutiny in the Commons at the end of session 2007-08. (Paragraph 38)

The Government recognises that the question of whether there should be a separate select committee for science and technology will remain a matter of interest. The Government considers that the decision reached by the House in July, to establish the new Innovation, Universities and Skills Committee, with full responsibility for monitoring the work of the whole range of the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills' activities, was the right one. The Government will of course consider fully any future recommendations from the IUS Committee or any other source, but it would not be appropriate at this stage to give an undertaking to review the issue in the House.

January 2008

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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First Special Report	The Funding of Science and Discovery Centres: Government Response to the Eleventh Report from the Science and Technology Committee, Session 2006–07	HC 214