

# EDINBURGH MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY

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Dear Ms Gibson,

## SCIENCE AND INNOVATION STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND: CONSULTATION PAPER

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I am responding to the consultation paper on a "Science and Innovation Strategy for Scotland" on behalf of the Edinburgh Mathematical Society, the principal mathematical society for the university community in Scotland.

I welcome the consultation document. It is clearly an extremely wide-ranging review across the broad spectrum of the Sciences, but in view of my position as a spokesman for the Edinburgh Mathematical Society, I believe that I should confine myself to a few comments on how I see the position of Mathematics in Scotland now and in a hoped-for exciting and challenging future. I have elected not to answer the detailed consultation questions as I feel that these are more appropriately dealt with by, for example, researchers in specific areas, rather than by the spokesman for an over-arching organisation such as ours.

As a mathematician I believe that Mathematics should form an integral part of Science training; its role within such disciplines as Physics, Engineering and Informatics is unarguable, and the creation of mathematically literate researchers in these areas is, in my view, vital to both short and long-term developments in them. Furthermore, Mathematics is also a key subject in its own right and should be studied as such within any country that views itself as providing a comprehensive education for its citizens. The pursuit of mathematical research may not lead directly to immediate commercial benefits, but can be of great significance in the longer term; for example, Galois Theory, long regarded as the most arcane of mathematical topics, now finds widespread application within the Communications industry. For these reasons, I believe that Mathematics has a vital role to play within the modern knowledge-based economy.

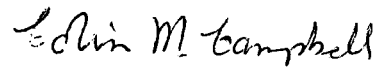
In order to realise the themes of promoting science careers and public engagement with science, it is necessary that there is a good supply of Mathematics teachers who have been well-educated in the Mathematical Sciences, Statistics and Computer Science. Teaching is a challenging career that can be extremely satisfying but regrettably these days does not enjoy the prestige that it should, and is frequently a last career choice for aspiring professionals; steps taken to raise its status would help ensure a flow of more talented mathematicians into teaching with consequential benefits to the mathematical literacy of Scottish school children generally.

Mathematics graduates are highly sought after in a wide range of careers outside Mathematics itself (notably research in other sciences, finance, administration and more). It is important to note that



people in such careers are in no way lost to Mathematics. Their knowledge and subsequent experience makes them potentially a source of valuable skills which could be used in the training of a future generation of scientists in research, industry and education.

I hope that the consultation exercise proves to be useful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin M. Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Yours sincerely,  
Colin M Campbell  
President of the Edinburgh Mathematical Society and  
Reader in Pure Mathematics, University of St Andrews

