

National STEM Centre – Additional Information

The case for establishing a National STEM Centre came from the 2006 DTI/DFES STEM Programme Report which proposed the development of a 'British Library of STEM Resources'. The report also identified the need for the key national STEM organisations (network of Science Learning Centres, National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, Royal Academy of Engineering, Royal Society, STEMNET, etc) to work more closely together if the delivery of STEM enhancement and enrichment activities was to be improved, so that a more coherent and well communicated support service is provided to STEM teachers and lecturers.

The National STEM Centre seeks to:

(i) Create and manage a resource centre, which will collect in one place all of the government, learned society, charitable foundation and commercial STEM curriculum support resources. The resource centre was initially developed to support the Continuing Professional Development courses provided to teachers at the National Science Learning Centre (NSLC), and arguably contained the most complete collection of science teaching resources in the UK. Support for NSLC courses remains a key priority for the resource centre. In addition the development of the National STEM Centre will see the resource centre collections expanded to include mathematics, technology and engineering. The resource centre will store, catalogue and make available current and newly produced STEM resources and have the capacity to create an historical collection of the best resources produced over the last 40 years.

(ii) Enable internet access, so that teachers, lecturers and others, who are unable to visit the collections at York may access the resources via internet access (subject to licensing restrictions). The physical collection of resources will be electronically catalogued to allow remote access by teachers. Some resources will already be in electronic format and these will be made available to teachers via the internet. This part of the project is termed the 'eLibrary'.

(iii) Facilitate use of the Centre by mathematics, engineering and technology teachers. The NSLC will hold continuing professional development (CPD) events for over 1,100 science teachers each year during 2008-2013. In addition, by 2012 a range of events implemented by the National STEM Centre will attract 1,150 mathematics, engineering and technology teachers to use the Centre each year.

(iv) Provide hot-desking space for key STEM organisations. A building extension was completed in 2009 to provide STEM partner organisations with 'hot-desk' space. In addition the building programme established a video conferencing suite, an ICT suite and an additional teaching room. The National STEM Centre can provide a working base at any one time for up to ten organisations that provide STEM support ('STEM Associates').

The National STEM Centre is managed by the Director (Jenifer Burden), reporting to the National STEM Director (Professor Sir John Holman) and Associate Director (Professor Mary Ratcliffe). Supporting the Director are the Mathematics Specialist, Resource Centre Coordinator, three Resource Centre Assistants, Web Editor, eLibrary Co-ordinator, several resource consultants and the Administrator.