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Professor David Eastwood, Chief Executive, told HEFCE's annual meeting today (8 November):

'This funding brings the support that HEFCE is giving to strategically important and vulnerable subjects to nearly a quarter of a billion pounds by 2010. As we reported to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills last month, we are already implementing a £160 million programme of work. Much of this is designed to raise the aspirations of young people to study subjects which are

Through this additional funding of £25 million a year over three years we want to ensure that in the future there will be sufficient provision to meet increased demand from students. Chemistry, physics and some engineering subjects are particularly expensive to provide and have been in relative decline with respect to student numbers.

We are very impressed with the commitment shown by the Institute of Physics, the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Royal Academy of Engineering to raise demand in these subjects, with our support, through working closely with schools and employers. There are also many other government initiatives being taken forward through the 10 Year Science and Innovation Investment Framework. We believe it is far more cost-effective to adopt a new

limited approach to sustain capacity while this demand

raising activity produces results. It would be much more expensive to rebuild capacity from scratch to meet increased demand in the future.'

The additional funding for chemistry, physics and the other subjects mentioned will increase the HEFCE teaching grant for these subjects by approximately 20 per cent or by one thousand pounds per student.

Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, Bill Rammell, said:

'The Government is training science spending overall by more than £1 billion by 2007-08 compared with 2004.

05. We have significantly increased the number of science undergraduates and raised the numbers coming through teacher training in science subjects. This further initiative of £75 million extra support for chemistry and physics will help to bolster these key strategic subjects.'

