



Breathing new life into **wind energy**



A new training centre will provide the skills to sustain the UK's rapidly expanding wind energy industry and help us hit renewable power targets. The state-of-the-art Wind Energy Systems training centre at the university of Strathclyde is headed by Professor Bill Leithead and will train PhD students in wind energy science and technology.

310%

Increase in UK wind power generation between 2003 and 2007.

Training supported by the Research Councils' Energy Programme will provide the skilled people needed to fuel this growth.

Solar and tidal power has great potential, but wind power will need to make a major contribution if the UK is to hit its target of 20 per cent of electricity from renewable sources by 2020. To do this, the UK needs a new generation of wind energy specialists.

"Wind energy is suffering from a shortage of people across the board, from technicians through to graduate level and beyond. This is not just a UK shortage, it is EU and worldwide and could hamper the progress of the industry," adds Professor Leithead. The centre will help to address this shortage.

It will recruit students from a range of backgrounds – physical sciences, engineering, architecture, economics and the social sciences – to work on the research and socio-economic issues facing the industry.

Students will specialise in all aspects of wind power, from aerodynamics and mechanics to the core electrical and power conversion technology required.

But as one of a new breed of centres for doctoral training, the centre will go one step further. It will combine these skills with an awareness of the wider social and economic issues and so create a community of researchers capable of realising the UK's renewables goal.

"Every time someone proposes a wind farm there are objections from different groups," says Professor Leithead. "So we need to bring the public with us on this and we need to engage with people and educate them.

"We must take on board people's fears and changing attitudes and respond as a wind energy community. That is very important. We can improve technology greatly but unless it is accepted and deployed on a large scale little will be achieved."

The centre will draw on Strathclyde's strong tradition of research in wind power technologies and on resources at the Fraser of Allander Institute (economics) and Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship to provide the research leaders the wind power industry needs.

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**Research Councils' Energy Programme,
led by EPSRC**

The mission of the Energy Programme is to position the UK to meet its energy and environmental targets and policy goals through high quality research and postgraduate training. The programme builds on a strong portfolio in power generation and supply and aims to grow the portfolio areas of demand reduction, alternative energy vectors, transport and security of supply.

