

# Strategically Important Subjects in Higher Education: Partnership to Improve the Skills Base of UK plc

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# Strategic skills

- RDAs delivering Regional Economic Strategies
- UK plc needs from the skills base
- RDAs and HE in partnership

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# RDAs' purpose

- Sustainable economic growth
- Champion for smart growth
- 5 drivers of productivity:
  - Investment, including R&D
  - Innovation
  - Enterprise
  - Skills
  - Competition, driving efficiency

# What can RDAs offer?

- 10 Year Strategy for Science and Innovation – RDA role
- DTI Technology Strategy – RDAs facilitating knowledge based networks
- RDA Investment in SET

# RDA SET expenditure

£240m SET-related  
expenditure

	£million
W Midlands	37
East England	9-10
East Midlands	9
London	15
North West	39
North East	60
South East	8-10
South West	10
Yorks Humber	50

# What can RDAs offer?

- Voice of business:
  - Business Links; Investor Development Managers
  - Business South East
- Innovative approaches to driving productivity:
  - Manufacturing Advisory Service
  - Enterprise Hubs
- University Centres - raising potential and addressing under-performance

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# UK plc needs

- An internationally competitive workforce
- Graduates with the appropriate skills for employability
- Better skilled people in under-performing areas

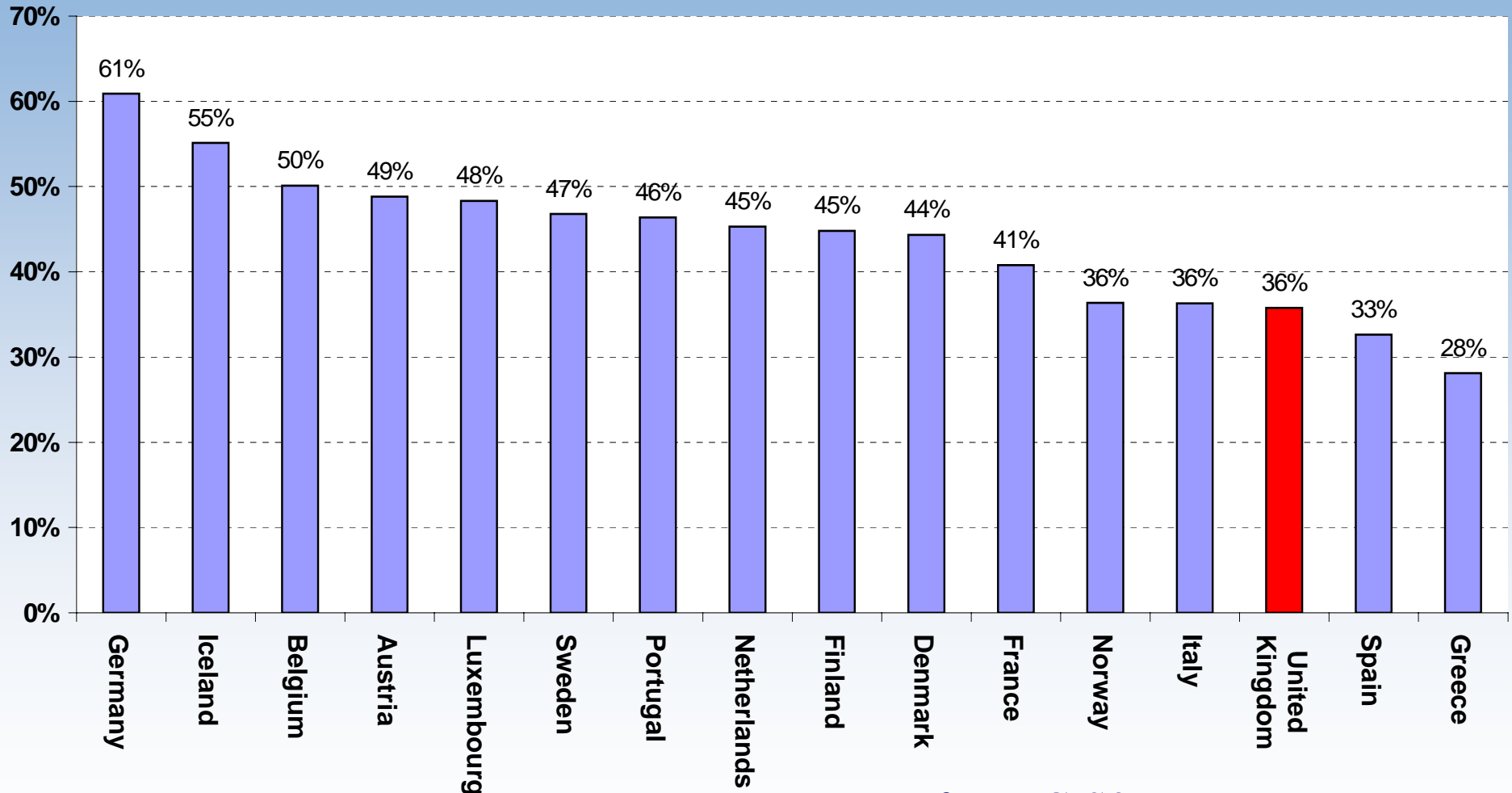
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# Internationally competitive workforce - innovation

Proportion of enterprises with innovation activities: 1998 - 2000

All enterprises



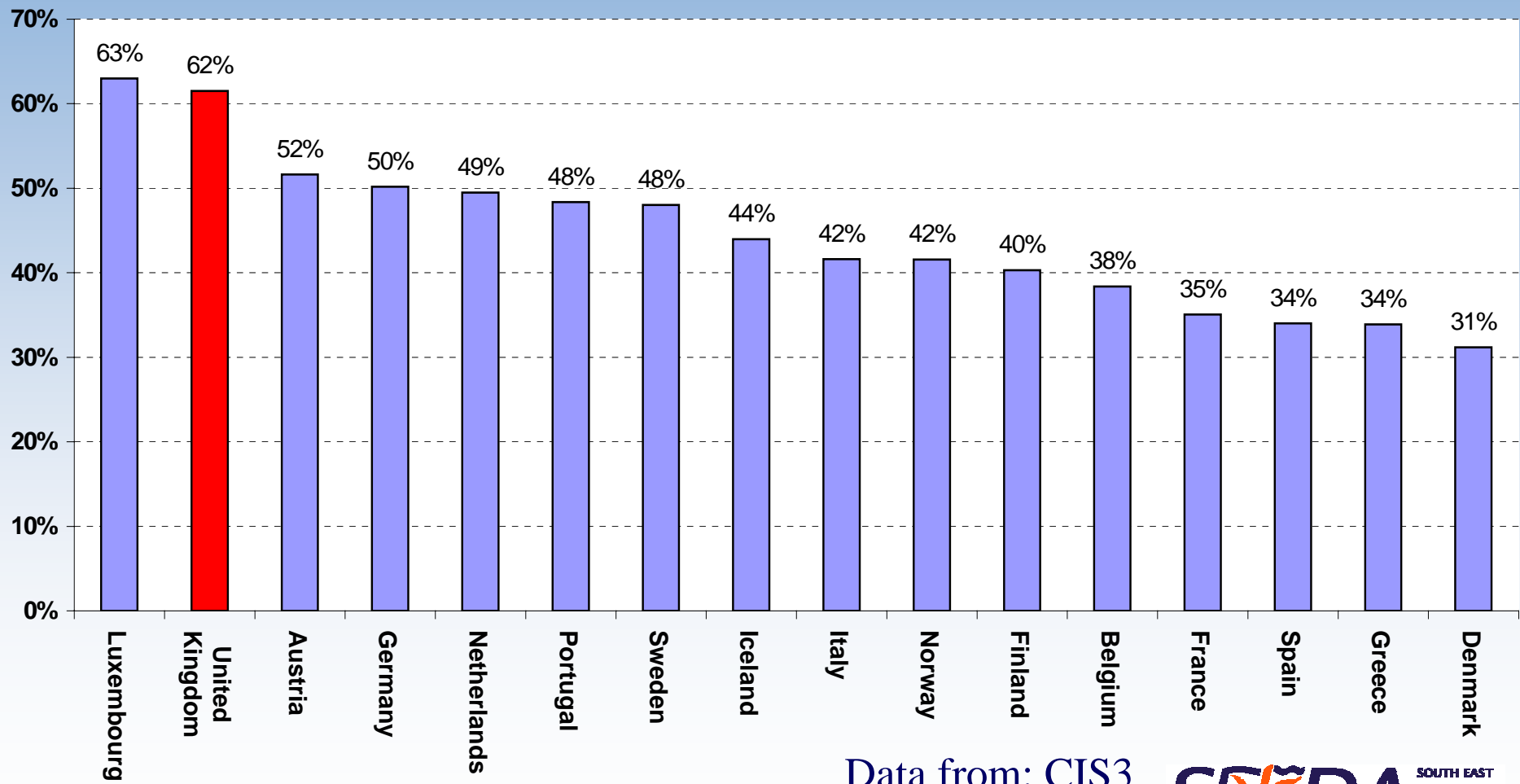
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Data from: CIS3

# Internationally competitive workforce - corporate strategy anyone?

Proportion of innovation active enterprises that implemented new or significantly changed corporate strategies: 1998 - 2000

All enterprises



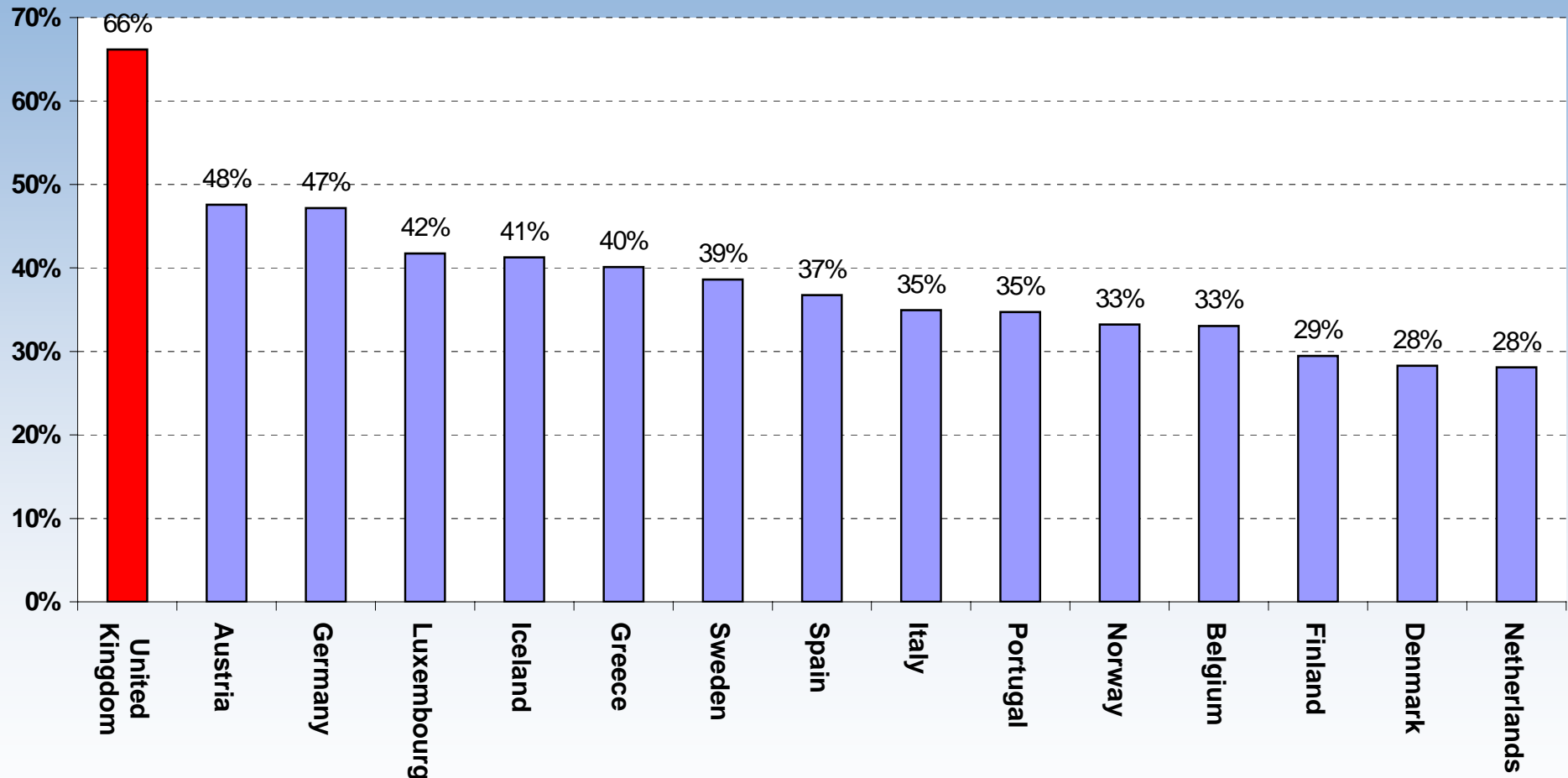
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Data from: CIS3

# Internationally competitive workforce - new marketing strategy?

Proportion of innovation active enterprises that significantly changed their marketing concepts/strategies: 1998 - 2000

All enterprises



Note: No data available for France

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Data from: CIS3

# Internationally competitive workforce - science & technology skills

	S&T workers as % of total employment	Researchers per 1000 employment
UK	25	6
France	29	8
Germany	34	7
USA	33	9

- UK production of PhDs comparable to others, but...
- UK bottom of leading countries in S&T intensity of workforce

# Creating an internationally competitive workforce

- Curriculum development and course delivery
- Critical subjects:
  - Sustainability of departments
  - Chemistry, Modern Languages, Statistics
  - Technical skills
- Work-based learning eg technical skills for new technologies

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# Skills for employability

- Lambert review – greater involvement of business in course design and delivery
- Graduates often not suitably skilled for a business environment
  - project management, entrepreneurship, innovation, people skills

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# Lifting skills in under-performing areas

- Low participation rates in deprived areas
- Increase progression routes through FE
- School careers and course advice
- CPD needs for teachers

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# RDAAs and HE in partnership - articulating demand

- Regional Skills Partnerships
- Science and Industry Councils

# RDAAs and HE in Partnership – examples of success

- Student demand for courses
- Curriculum development by employers
- Education-led regeneration.
- Developing entrepreneurs
- Identifying critical subject shortages
- University collaborations

# 1. Influencing student demand - Computer Clubs for Girls (CC4G)



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## 2. Curriculum development by employers

- The e-Skills degree
  - Focus on IT project management
  - Designed by industry, for industry
  - Delivery by Reading, Greenwich (at University Centre, Hastings), Leeds Metropolitan, Northumbria



### 3. Education-led regeneration

- Widening access and increasing progression through local HE provision
- Multiversities
  - The Thames Gateway – Medway, East London, Southend
  - Hastings - five point plan

# University Centre Hastings (UCH)

**Joint Centre for Universities of Brighton, Sussex, OU  
and Hastings FE College**



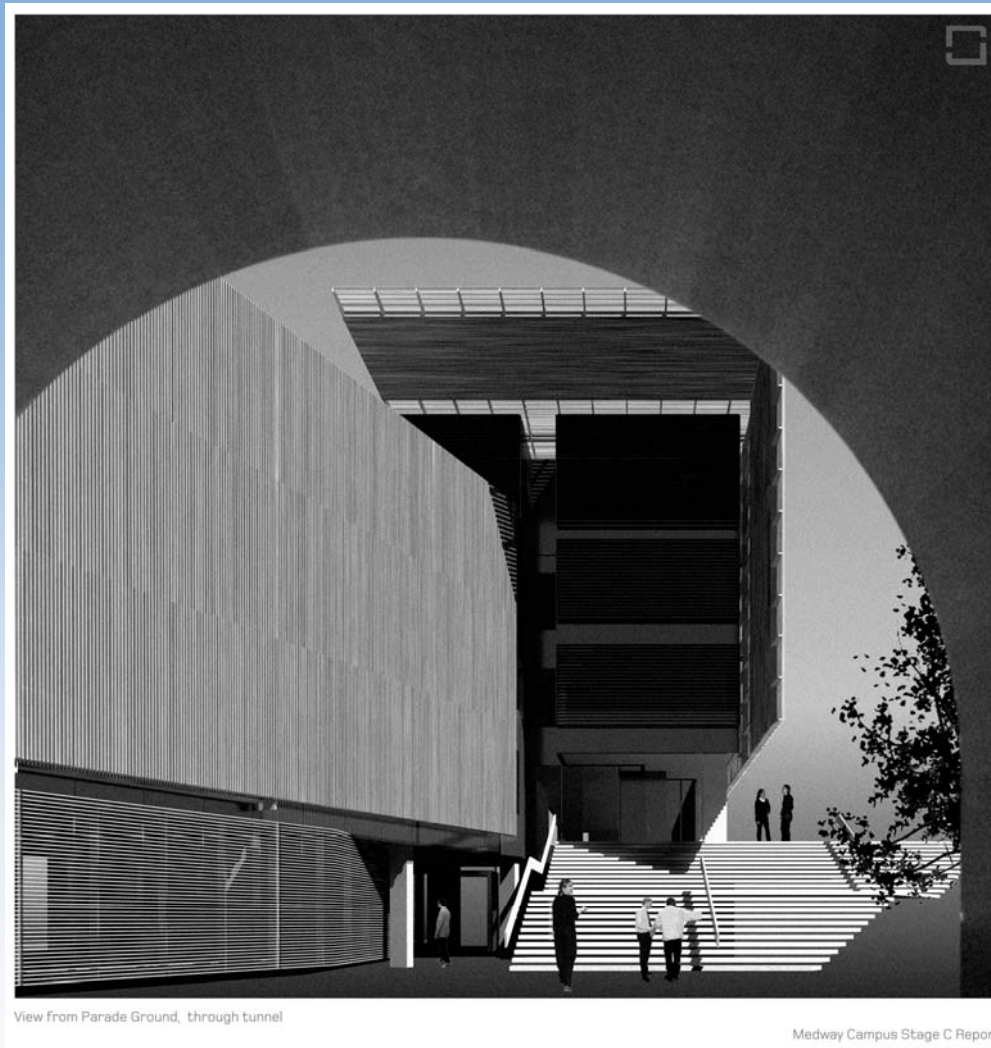
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# Universities at Medway



Perspective view of mezzanine

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## 4. Developing Entrepreneurs

- Higher Education Entrepreneurship Group – a forum for entrepreneurship academics, professionals and practitioners
- Great Ideas in Science and Technology (GRIST)

## 5. Critical Subject Shortages

- Physical sciences, particularly chemistry; statistics
- Only 4 honours chemistry departments in the SE
- RDAs can:
  - provide regional intelligence on supply and demand
  - act as advocate for regions' HEIs

## 6. Collaboration for Excellence

- Balancing the Southern centre of gravity - White Rose consortium
- University of Manchester merger with UMIST
- West Focus

# Conclusions

- RDAs contribute to the skills agenda
- RDAs, HEIs, Government and funding bodies must work in partnership to improve competitiveness
- HEFCE's role in creating the environment for education for productivity as well as learning for its own sake.