

Press Release

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## Open letter to university leaders advocates the importance of materials, minerals & mining

Six organisations (CMA(UK), IOM3, IQ, MAUK, MPA and MPQC) have signed an open letter to UK university leaders setting out the essential role of materials, minerals and mining in modern society.

The Critical Minerals Association (CMA (UK)), Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining (IOM3), Institute of Quarrying (IQ), Mineral Products Association (MPA), Mineral Products Qualification Council (MPQC) and Mining Association of the UK (MAUK) have jointly written an [open letter to UK universities](#) to provide evidence-based information about the key role of materials, minerals and mining in daily life and the transition to a low-carbon, resilient and resource-efficient society.

The signatories have come together to support informed decision-making and to shine a light on the need for a high-quality education and training pipeline for a skilled, responsible and sustainable materials, minerals and mining workforce.

As global demand for the resources required for modern life – including for our homes, transport systems, healthcare and clean-energy technologies – continues to rise, moving to decouple economies from reliance upon virgin resource use and towards a more circular economy will be crucial. The letter highlights that in the short- to medium-term, however, this will not be sufficient. As extraction of resources will continue to play a role in meeting society's demands, it is vital that it is done in a responsible way that considers environmental, carbon and social impacts.

The letter continues that this will only be possible if we can supply enough people who have the required skills, education and training, with access to pathways into the industry and awareness of the employment opportunities available.

At the same time, however, there are significant and growing skills gaps along minerals value chains and a decline in education and training provision, as highlighted by the IOM3 report [The Talent Gap: Critical Skills for Critical Materials](#). Together with the CMA (UK) Perception & Engagement Working Group report [A Talent Pipeline](#) and the [CBI Minerals Group UK Minerals Strategy](#) update, the need to support a robust skills pipeline is clear. The publications set out a number of measures needed to mitigate the growing challenge of accessing skilled professionals, as well as showcasing career opportunities that exist in the value chain.

The letter signatories collectively aim to combat misinformation and decision-making that is inconsistent with the need to increase sustainability and address the climate crisis. They work to raise the standards and professional competence in materials, minerals and mining, and support industries in driving environmental, social and governance best practice.

CMA (UK) Founder & Chief Executive Officer Kirsty Benham said, "If the UK wants to develop expertise, innovation and new businesses for critical minerals supply chains, it needs to build a talent pipeline of people skilled in geosciences, engineering, metallurgy and local planning. Building a talent pipeline is vital to ensuring that we have the skills and expertise needed to solve the innovation challenges of tomorrow and to meet the demand required to sustain modern society."

IOM3 CEO Dr Colin Church CEnv FIMMM said, "There is a real need for evidence-based decisions, especially when it concerns our future. If we want to transition to a low-carbon, resilient and resource-efficient society,



the responsible mining of metals and minerals is essential. This in turn means we need skilled professionals with high-quality education and training to do the work, and universities play an important role in this.”

IQ Chief Executive James Thorne said, “The Mineral Products Sector provides the critical building blocks to support society and the economy. The sector is playing an essential part in delivering the sustainable low-carbon transition that is needed. It is vital for the higher education sector to support our ongoing development through innovation, research and building the skills needed to drive our industry forward.”

MAUK’s President Andrew Fulton CEng FIMMM said, “For the UK’s mining sector to establish, demonstrate and lead global best practice standards in environmental, social and governance (ESG) and the achievement of broader sustainability, the education and training of skilled professionals is a necessary investment. It is so very important that all generations develop a clear understanding of the connection between consumer products and the mining industry, and how they can use this understanding to play a meaningful role in tackling climate change. To enhance this, we must all embrace our national value for open, transparent and objective debate.”

MPA Chief Executive Jon Prichard CEng FICE FInstRE said, “It is essential that UK universities continue to offer the educational programmes that equip graduates with the knowledge to support the net-zero journey for sectors such as the mineral products industry, which underpin the fabric of society. Mineral products literally provide the foundations for infrastructure and housing, while also being fundamental to the solutions that will deliver climate change adaptation.”

MPQC Chief Executive Viv Russell FIQ FGS said, “Universities and Higher Further Education establishments are essential to creating a future sustainable workforce providing essential minerals for our society and meeting the challenge of a zero-carbon future.”

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**Notes to Editors:**

- Critical Minerals Association (UK): The Critical Minerals Association (UK) provides a unique platform for stakeholders across the value chain to come together and share key insights with the Government on how and why we should develop alternative, responsible, and resilient critical mineral supply chains. The Association was founded in 2020 by Jeff Townsend and Kirsty Benham, both of whom saw that the UK’s Green Industrial Strategy and Net Zero ambitions do not consider the vulnerability of today’s critical mineral supply. By engaging government, producing thought leadership, organising events and networking across sectors, and providing media and outreach opportunities, the CMA (UK) amplifies the voices of its members so they can collectively be at the forefront of influencing policy.  
<https://www.criticalmineral.org/>
- Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining: The Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining (IOM3) is a professional engineering, environmental and scientific institution, a registered charity and governed by a Royal Charter. IOM3 supports professionals in materials, minerals, mining and associated technical disciplines to be champions of the transition to a low-carbon, resilient and resource-efficient society. It seeks to be the best professional membership body it can be by providing modern, flexible services; quality technical content; and value for money.  
<https://www.iom3.org/>
- Institute of Quarrying: The Institute of Quarrying (IQ) is the international professional body for quarrying, construction materials and the related extractive and processing industries, with over 6,000 members in some 50 countries of the world. Membership is open to individuals, rather than companies, and the Institute’s long-term objective is to promote progressive improvements in all aspects of operational performance through the medium of education and training. The Institute believes education and training is a lifelong opportunity which should be viewed in the broadest terms, starting with initial qualifications gained at college, university or through distance learning programmes. This is followed by continuing



professional development through attendance at conferences, seminars, training courses, competence assessment schemes, workshops, technical meetings, site visits and the updating of knowledge by reading the Institute's journals, technical and management papers and handbooks.

<https://www.quarrying.org/>

- **Mineral Products Association:** The Mineral Products Association (MPA) is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, dimension stone, lime, mortar and industrial sand industries. It has a growing membership of 520 companies and is the sectoral voice for mineral products. MPA membership is made up of the vast majority of independent SME quarrying companies throughout the UK, as well as the 9 major international and global companies. It covers 100% of UK cement and lime production, 90% of GB aggregates production, 95% of asphalt and over 70% of ready-mixed concrete and precast concrete production. In 2021, the industry supplied £22 billion worth of materials and services to the Economy. It is also the largest supplier to the construction industry, which had annual output valued at £178 billion. Industry production represents the largest materials flow in the UK economy and is also one of the largest manufacturing sectors.

<https://www.mineralproducts.org>

- **Mineral Products Qualification Council:** Our purpose is to fulfil the extractive sector's need for a safe, competent and sustainable workforce through setting and maintaining standards, maintaining qualifications and ensuring quality training and assessment

<https://www.mp-qc.org/>

- **Mining Association of the UK:** The Mining Association of the UK (MAUK) is the voice for the underground mining sector, representing 28 mines in all four nations across 12 different minerals. The Association promotes and provides best practice guidance in all sector matters of ESG, with a core focus on Major Hazard Management and provides a Mutual Aid framework for emergency response and recovery. The Association also provides technical networking visits and references for established and emerging operators to enhance mine design principles and operating practices.

<http://www.mauk.org.uk/>

