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From the Minister without Portfolio  
The Rt Hon Lord Young of Graffham

The Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Joseph MP  
Secretary of State,  
Department of Education & Science,  
Elizabeth House,  
York Road,  
London, S.E.1.

5th February, 1985

**THE SWITCH TO ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY**

As I will not be able to attend the meeting on 6th February to discuss your proposals, I am writing to let you have my views.

I appreciate the problems which you face in reducing degree provision for non-scientific subjects in order to free resources for subjects of higher priority. Nevertheless, I think we are all agreed on the urgent need for more engineering and technology places. I wonder whether means cannot be found to overcome the difficulties in redeploying resources freed from reductions in arts provision outside the universities if you are convinced that it would be wrong to reduce the number of arts places in the universities. Unless we take some steps to signal our belief that the balance of places overall is out of line with current needs, I assume students will continue to take at school subjects which perpetuate the present unsatisfactory position.

Can we not also consider conversion courses which will enable arts A level students to take engineering and technical degrees? These could be containable within the first year of a degree.

I also wonder whether the option of seeking university staff reductions in arts subjects which you propose as an alternative is worth pursuing given the costs and the likely effect on the quality of courses unless it is accompanied by a shift in the balance of provision.

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I am copying this to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State for Employment, Trade & Industry, Scotland and Wales, the Chief Secretary, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Sir Robin Nicholson and the Secretary of the Cabinet.

James  
Hawthorn

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