



All-Party Parliamentary University Group

Weekly update

05 – 09 January 2026

A regular digest of House of Commons, House of Lords, and higher education sector business.

If you would like more information on parliamentary business, please contact:

Andrea Rezman | appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk

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Parliamentary business

Home Office - Oral Questions

On Monday 05 January, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, and her ministerial colleagues, answered oral questions in the House of Commons.

Daniel Zeichner (Labour) raised concerns about the Home Office's move to a new digital English-language testing system for UK visa applicants. He cited evidence from Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which has extensive experience delivering in-country, in-person English tests, and warned that remote testing could increase the risk of impersonation. He asked the Minister to review the proposed change in light of these integrity concerns.

Responding, Mike Tapp said that the Home Office's English-language testing procurement process has now formally launched. Given that the procurement is live, he did not comment on the specifics, but assured the House that any delivery model adopted by the Home Office will be required to meet appropriate integrity and security standards.

You [can read the full transcript](#).

Decline in graduate jobs and the extent to which it constitutes a long-term trend that requires intervention – HoL Oral Question

On Tuesday 06 January, an oral question titled “Decline in graduate jobs and the extent to which it constitutes a long-term trend that requires intervention” took place in the House of Lords. This question was tabled by Lord McNicol of West Kilbride (Labour).

Opening the exchange, **Lord McNicol** asked what assessment the Government had made of the reported decline in graduate jobs and whether this reflected a long-term structural trend requiring intervention. He raised concerns about the employment prospects facing young people leaving university, particularly in the context of wider changes in the labour market.

Responding for the Government, **Baroness Sherlock** (Labour), Minister of State at the Department for Work and Pensions, acknowledged that while graduates continue to

have higher employment rates than non-graduates, there are clear challenges for young people entering the labour market. She outlined a package of government interventions aimed at improving outcomes, including £1 billion of investment in sector-based skills packages, the launch of a new jobs and careers service to improve access to careers advice, and the delivery of the youth guarantee for 16 to 24 year-olds, including graduates.

Lord McNicol welcomed the Minister's response and reflected on the long-standing policy emphasis on encouraging school leavers to attend university. Drawing on his own experience of technical education, he argued that greater effort was needed to ensure careers advice and technical pathways are better tailored to future skills needs, particularly in light of structural changes in employment opportunities.

Baroness Sherlock agreed that the graduate labour market is facing challenges but cautioned against assuming a long-term decline in graduate jobs, noting that the evidence on the impact of artificial intelligence remains contested and evolving. She emphasised the Government's focus on supporting access to high-quality careers rather than entry-level roles, through investment in growth sectors, improved skills provision and strengthened careers support. She argued that AI presents both challenges and opportunities, and expressed optimism that younger people are well placed to benefit from technological change.

Lord Baker of Dorking (Conservative) argued that policy should place greater emphasis on discouraging some young people from attending university in favour of apprenticeships, highlighting strong employment and earnings outcomes for apprentices. In response, Baroness Sherlock stressed that the Government shares the ambition to expand high-quality apprenticeships, pointing to the Prime Minister's target for two-thirds of young people to enter higher-level learning by age 25, including university and "gold-standard" apprenticeships, with a specific focus on level 4 and 5 provision.

Lord Londesborough (Crossbench) raised concerns about a long-term mismatch between the supply of graduates and the availability of graduate jobs, linking this to rising student debt and questioning the sustainability of the current higher education funding model. Baroness Sherlock responded by reiterating evidence that graduates continue to experience higher employment rates, higher-skilled work and stronger lifetime earnings on average. She emphasised the importance of ensuring young people receive appropriate advice to choose pathways that suit them and acknowledged the need for a secure financial footing for higher education institutions. She confirmed that tuition fee caps have been increased in line with forecast inflation, with future uplifts conditional on quality thresholds overseen by the Office for Students.

The **Lord Bishop of Chester** raised the role of graduate internships, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises and in sectors such as health and social care, noting constraints on hiring, especially for nurses. Baroness Sherlock highlighted work to expand access to internships and work experience, particularly for young people without financial or social capital, and set out measures to support those who are long-term unemployed, including guaranteed six-month job placements. She also highlighted the role of professional and higher-level apprenticeships, including in nursing and other regulated professions.

Baroness Garden of Frognal (Liberal Democrat) asked whether universities are sufficiently focused on equipping students with work-relevant skills and effective careers guidance. In response, Baroness Sherlock argued that university careers support has improved significantly, with stronger employer engagement and a growing emphasis on transferable skills such as analytical thinking, creativity and resilience, which she said are valued across the labour market.

Finally, **Baroness O'Loan** (Crossbench) raised concerns about shortages in skilled trades such as electricians and plumbers, questioning whether sufficient attention is being paid to apprenticeships for those for whom university is not appropriate. Baroness Sherlock responded that sector-based skills funding is designed to address employer demand across a wide range of areas, including engineering, green energy and other sectors requiring technical and trade skills.

You can [watch the debate](#) and [read the full transcript](#).

House of Lords – Oral Questions

On Tuesday 6 January, the Minister of State for the Department of Work and Pensions, Baroness Sherlock, answered [questions on graduate jobs](#).

Lord McNicol of West Kilbride asked the Minister what assessment the government have made of the decline in graduate jobs. **The Minister** highlighted that the employment rate for graduates still remains higher than for non-graduates, but acknowledged the challenges for graduates. She said that her government are investing into sector skills packages, careers services and introducing a youth guarantee. Lord McNicol asked if more can be done to ensure technical education is better tailored to future skills needs. The Minister said that we don't have the evidence to show that AI is having an impact on the long-term decline of graduate jobs, but the government does need to act to ensure that young people have access to high-quality careers.

Lord Baker of Dorking asked the Minister if we should be convincing more young people not to go to university, and to do apprenticeships instead. In response, the

Minster said that her government are already convincing more young people to take up apprenticeships with the ambition for two-thirds of young people to take up apprenticeships or go to university.

Lord Londesborough said that there is a mismatch between the supply of graduates and number of graduate jobs available, resulting in a 'mountain of student debt' and asked if the Minister accepts that the whole university system needs reform. The Minister highlighted the benefits of a degree on earnings and employment, but that we need to ensure young people are aware of their options. On funding, the Minister highlighted the government's decision to increase tuition-fees in line with forecast inflation.

The Lord Bishop of Chester asked the Minister what the government is doing to promote graduate internships. In response, the Minister said that one of their challenges is for the government is to make sure there are more opportunities for work experience and internships for those who do not have the advantages of money and connections.

Baroness Garden of Frognal asked the Minister if graduates are learning skills suitable for the workplace. The Minister highlighted that university careers support has come a long way and that the DWP are working with FE and HE apprenticeship providers to make sure that the right skills are being developed and people are going into the areas where there is growth.

Baroness O'Loan asked what the government are doing to address the national shortage of electricians, plumbers and plasterers. The Minister said that the government's investment into sector skills will also cover engineering, green energy and other areas.

Student Finance (Review of Payment Schedules) Bill – HoC Ten Minute Rule Motion

On Wednesday 07 January, there was a Ten Minute Rule motion on Student Finance (Review of Payment Schedules) Bill, tabled by Luke Charters MP (Labour).

Opening the debate, **Luke Charters MP** set out the case for requiring the Government to review how student finance maintenance payments are scheduled and paid to students. He argued that the current system of termly lump-sum payments is poorly aligned with students' real-world financial pressures, particularly monthly rent, utility bills and other living costs. He contended that this mismatch often forces students to rely on overdrafts, credit cards or family support, increasing financial stress and anxiety.

Charters highlighted evidence of widespread student financial hardship and drew attention to the impact this can have on mental health, academic performance and access to higher education. He argued that payment schedules should better reflect the budgeting realities faced by students, especially those from lower-income backgrounds who are less able to absorb gaps in cash flow.

He focused particularly on the potential benefits of moving towards more regular or monthly maintenance payments. He pointed to arrangements in other parts of the UK, including Scotland, where maintenance support is paid monthly, and suggested that such an approach could be introduced at limited cost while significantly improving financial stability for students. He emphasised that the Bill does not mandate a specific model, but instead requires a formal review to assess options and impacts.

Charters also raised concerns about the complexity and transparency of the student finance system more broadly.

Drawing on his own experience as a former regulator and as a graduate repaying student loans, he argued that clearer communication and fairer structures are needed to maintain confidence in the system and ensure it supports participation rather than deterring prospective students.

The motion was agreed without a vote, allowing the Bill to be formally presented and read for the first time. The Student Finance (Review of Payment Schedules) Bill is scheduled for its Second Reading on Friday 16 January.

You can [watch the debate](#) and [read the transcript](#).

Schools and Universities: Language Learning – HoL Debate

On Thursday 08 January, the House of Lords held a debate on “Schools and Universities: Language Learning”, introduced by Baroness Coussins (Crossbench), who moved that the House take note of measures to improve the supply chain of qualified modern foreign language teachers and the sustainability of language learning in schools and universities.

Baroness Coussins emphasised the plummeting numbers of modern language degree applicants, noting that applications to study languages at university have fallen sharply and many institutions have ceased offering language degrees. She argued that this decline in university provision undermines the pipeline of future language teachers, intensifies teacher shortages, and weakens language teaching across the education system. To address this, she proposed strategic funding for modern

language degrees from the Office for Students, visa waivers to attract foreign language teachers and clearer immigration guidance, and incentives to boost A-level uptake, which feeds into university programmes.

Baroness Blower (Labour) echoed the need to “get schools and universities out of the spiral of decline”, noting that improvements in Initial Teacher Training recruitment have occurred against a backdrop of historically low recruitment and that sustained action is needed to prevent further contraction of language departments at the university level. She supported calls for reconsideration of visa waivers to improve recruitment of non-UK trainees and teachers.

Baroness Garden of Frognal (Liberal Democrat) drew on personal experience as a language learner and warned that fewer pupils studying languages leads to fewer university entrants and further closures of university language departments. She stressed the importance of restoring opportunities such as Erasmus+ and called for stronger support for language learning across the life course, including through lifelong learning entitlements that would benefit university-level and adult learners.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Crossbench) cited HESA figures showing a significant drop in modern foreign language enrolments at universities and warned that these declines create “cold spots” that feed back into lower GCSE and A-level participation. He suggested that the scale of the drop in university language places should act as a wake-up call for policy action to support universities in maintaining language provision.

You can [watch the debate](#) and [read the transcript](#).

Forthcoming Business

Government support for higher education – HoC Adjournment Debate

On Monday 12 January, there will be a House of Commons debate on “Government support for higher education” tabled in by Mr Bayo Alaba MP (Labour).

You [can watch the session.](#)

Potential merits of a statutory duty of care for universities – Westminster Hall Debate

On Tuesday 16 December, there will be a Westminster Hall debate on the “Potential merits of a statutory duty of care for universities”, tabled in by James Naish MP (Labour).

You [can watch the session.](#)

Written questions and statements

Department for Education: Overseas Students: Loans

Mel Stride (Conservative): (UIN100842) To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the outstanding value is of student loan debt owed by EU students; and how much of that debt is being actively repaid.

Josh MacAlister: An EU borrower is a borrower who was originally domiciled in an EU country prior to entering higher education in England. Tuition fee funding for new EU students in England without 'settled' or 'pre-settled status' ceased in the 2021/22 academic year. However, those continuing a course remain eligible for financial support for the duration of their course, in addition to those covered by the Withdrawal Agreements, subject to meeting other residency and course requirements.

The outstanding value of student loan debt owed by EU borrowers was £5.8 billion at 31 March 2025. Of EU borrowers liable to repay, 38.8% are actively repaying, have fully repaid or had their loan cancelled or written off. This data is published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loans-in-england-2024-to-2025/student-loans-in-england-financial-year-2024-25>.

A loan becomes liable for repayment when the borrower has passed their statutory repayment due date. This is normally the April after graduating or otherwise leaving their course, provided they are earning above the relevant income threshold.

Definitions of repayment terms can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loans-in-england-2024-to-2025/definitions-england>.

Department for Education: Erasmus+ Programme: Finance

Mel Stride (Conservative): (UIN100846) To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how will the cost of the Erasmus Scheme in 2027/28 be funded.

Josh MacAlister: We have agreed terms with the European Commission that represent a fair balance between the UK's contribution and the benefits the programme offers, which paved the way for UK participation.

We have agreed a 30% discount compared to the default terms in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, as well as a review of the UK's participation in the programme ten months after our association, including data concerning demand for funding in the UK. Going forward, any continued UK participation in Erasmus+ under the next Multiannual Financial Framework will be informed by our experience of association in 2027.

Erasmus costs will be funded above the department's spending review settlement and scored in the usual way at the next fiscal event.

Department for Education: Erasmus+ Programme

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated): (HL13142) To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support UK universities and employers in maximising the benefits of the UK's return to the Erasmus+ student exchange programme, particularly in relation to skills and labour mobility.

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Smith of Malvern: A National Agency will be appointed in due course to deliver Erasmus+ for the UK.

A website with further information will be launched by the UK's National Agency in summer 2026. Guidance on how to apply for Erasmus+ will be available on GOV.UK, and subsequently the National Agency's website in summer 2026.

The department will work closely with institutions and our young people to maximise take-up, particularly among disadvantaged groups, and provide certainty on complementary UK schemes so providers can plan confidently and deliver at pace.

Cabinet Office: Erasmus+ Programme: Social Mobility

The Lord Jackson of Peterborough (Conservative): (HL13109) To ask His Majesty's Government what analysis they have made of the impact on social mobility of the UK's participants of the proposed Erasmus+ scheme, agreed with the European Union and commencing in 2027.

The Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent: We have now concluded negotiations with the European Commission on association to Erasmus+ in 2027. The government remains committed to providing opportunities to study and work abroad, especially for those participants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We will now work closely with institutions and our young people to maximise take-up, particularly among disadvantaged groups. We expect that over 100,000 people could benefit from mobility and partnership opportunities from Erasmus+ participation in 2027-28.

This iteration of Erasmus+ has a bigger focus on participants from disadvantaged backgrounds, and one of its objectives is inclusion and supporting people with fewer opportunities to participate.

Department for Work and Pensions: Small Businesses: Apprentices

The Rt Hon. the Lord Reid of Cardowan (Labour): (HL12645) To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with employer representatives regarding barriers that prevent businesses from offering apprenticeships, and what support is being put in place to address them.

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Smith of Malvern: The government engages regularly with employers and their representative organisations to understand and address barriers to offering apprenticeships, as well as to inform the ongoing development of the growth and skills offer.

In addition, Skills England engaged with over 700 employers and other key organisations between November and December 2024 to establish initial views on what priority training should be accessible through the growth and skills offer. It summarised the findings of this analysis and engagement in its Skills for Growth and Opportunity report published in June.

To deliver the greater flexibility which employers have called for, this government is transforming the apprenticeships offer into a new growth and skills offer. In August we introduced new foundation apprenticeships for young people in targeted sectors, as well as shorter duration apprenticeships. From April 2026, we will introduce new short courses as part of the growth and skills offer in critical skills areas such as artificial intelligence, digital and engineering. Further detail on the offer will be set out in due course.

Additionally, from the next academic year, the government will fully fund apprenticeships for non-levy paying employers, essentially small and medium sized enterprises, for all eligible people aged under 25. This change will make it easier for smaller employers to engage with apprenticeships by cutting costs and reducing bureaucracy for both them and their training providers.

The government also facilitates and funds the Apprenticeship Ambassador Network (AAN) which comprises 2,500 employers and apprentices who volunteer to promote the benefits of apprenticeships. It operates across all parts of England through nine regional networks which provide buddyng and mentoring support to small businesses to help them recruit and retain apprentices.

Source

Department for Work and Pensions: Unemployment: Young People

The Lord Allen of Kensington CBE (Labour): (HL13005) To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce youth unemployment.

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Smith of Malvern: This Government is investing in young people's futures. At the Budget, we announced more than £1.5 billion of investment over the next three years, funding £820 million for the Youth Guarantee to support young people to earn or learn, and an additional £725 million for the Growth and Skills Levy.

Through the expanded Youth Guarantee, young people aged 16-24 across Great Britain are set to benefit from further support into employment and learning, including:

- **Support to find a job:** For young people on Universal Credit who are looking for work, we are introducing a new Youth Guarantee Gateway, which over the next three years will offer nearly 900,000 16-24-year-olds a dedicated session, followed by four weeks of additional intensive support with a Work Coach. This new support will identify specific work, training, or learning opportunities locally for each young person and ensure they are supported to take those up. This support could be delivered at a Youth Hub.
- **Further expansion of Youth Hubs:** We are expanding our network of Youth Hubs to over 360 locations so that all young people – including those not on benefits – can access opportunities and wider support in every local area of Great Britain. Youth Hubs will bring together partners from health, skills and the voluntary sector, working closely with Mayors and local authorities to deliver joined-up community-based support.
- **300,000 additional opportunities for workplace experience and training:** For young people on Universal Credit who are looking for work, we will create up to 150,000 additional work experience placements and up to 145,000 additional bespoke training opportunities designed in partnership with

employers – Sector-based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs). At the end of each SWAP, employers offer a guaranteed job interview to participants.

- **Guaranteeing jobs:** For long-term unemployed 18–21-year-olds on Universal Credit, the Jobs Guarantee scheme will provide six months of paid employment. This will reach around 55,000 young people over the next three years.
- **Prevention:** We are also making it easier to identify young people who need support, by investing in better data sharing for those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), further education attendance monitoring, and new risk of NEET data tools giving local areas more accurate insights to target support where it's needed most. We are also investing in work experience opportunities for young people at particular risk of becoming NEET, focused on pupils in state-funded Alternative Provision settings, (education provided outside mainstream or special schools for children who cannot attend a regular school, often due to exclusion, health needs, or other circumstances).

The £725 million package of reforms to the apprenticeship system will help to tackle youth unemployment and drive economic growth with thousands more young people expected to benefit over the next 3 years. This will include funded SME apprenticeships for eligible people aged under 25, and £140 million pilot of new approaches to better connect young people aged 16-24, especially those who are NEET, to local apprenticeship opportunities.

Department for Education: Higher Education: Admissions

Scott Arthur (Labour): (UIN99986) To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the accessibility of information provided by English universities on entry requirements for Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers on their websites.

Josh MacAlister: Universities are autonomous bodies, independent from government and are responsible for their own admissions decisions.

Universities are free to decide their entry criteria, and admissions teams consider a broad range of information about a student in addition to their predicted grades.

The department continues to work with key sector stakeholders such as higher education providers, UCAS and Universities UK to ensure that students have access to

a comprehensive wealth of information, advice and guidance, allowing them to make fully informed and appropriate decisions on course and provider choice.

Department for Education: Students: Loans

Richard Holden (Conservative): (UIN99800) To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the annual cost is of providing student loan financing to students who are not UK citizens; and whether she has made an estimate of the potential impact of restricting student loan eligibility to British citizens on costs to her Department.

Josh MacAlister: Higher education student finance is targeted on those persons with a lawful and substantial residential connection to the UK. To qualify, most persons must be 'settled' in the UK. There are limited exceptions to this, such as for individuals granted international protection by the Home Office, for example persons with refugee status, who may be eligible for support without meeting the standard residency and settlement criteria.

In the 2024/25 academic year, the Student Loans Company (SLC) made payments totalling £3,794 million for Fee and Maintenance Loans (full-time and part-time) to undergraduate students domiciled in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the EU who declared they were non-UK nationals.

Previous PQs have reported figures based on nationality as declared when creating a student finance account, rather than the verified status at loan approval. The SLC has robust procedures in place to check eligibility for student finance, including data-sharing with the Home Office and HM Passport Office. Eligibility is dependent on a successful identity check, immigration status and residency history. No funding is approved without complete, verified, and eligible nationality, status and residence history.

The department has not made any estimate of costs on the potential impact of restricting student loan eligibility to British citizens.

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Department for Education: Overseas Students: Fees and Charges

Clive Betts (Labour): (UIN99688) To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will extend the 'Respond by' deadline on the technical consultation on the International Student Levy until after her Department has published the research it commissioned on student price elasticities in Spring 2026.

Josh MacAlister: The international student levy forms part of our wider plan for higher education student finance and funding reform, as set out in the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, which puts the sector on a secure financial footing whilst also ensuring it contributes to wider governmental objectives.

The department is continuing to engage with providers on the implementation of the levy, to ensure its effective introduction and operation. Our technical consultation gives stakeholders the opportunity to contribute their views and shape how the levy will be delivered. It is open until 18 February 2026 in line with usual practice for consultations.

Department for Education: Students: Loans

Richard Holden (Conservative): (UIN99801) To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential impact of removing interest charges from student loans for UK nationals on costs to the public purse.

Josh MacAlister: Education is a devolved matter, and this response outlines the information for England only.

The government keeps the student finance system under continuous review to ensure that it delivers good value for both students and taxpayers.

Student loans are subject to interest to ensure that those who can afford to do so contribute to the full cost of their degree. To consider both students and taxpayers and ensure the real value of the loans over the repayment term, interest rates are linked to inflation.

Interest rates do not impact monthly repayments made by student loan borrowers. Regular repayments are based on a borrower's monthly or weekly income, not on interest rates or the amount borrowed. Outstanding debt, including interest built up, is cancelled after the loan term ends (or in case of death or disability) at no detriment to the borrower.

A full equality impact assessment of how the student loan reforms may affect graduates under Plan 5 was produced and published in February 2022, and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reform-equality-impact-assessment>.

Department for Work and Pensions: Employment: Young People

The Baroness Neville-Rolfe DBE CMG (Conservative): (HL13194) To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the comments by Baroness Sherlock comments in reply to Lord Hunt of Wirral in the House on 18 December, whether the independent investigation into rising youth inactivity will look at incentives, in particular earnings relative to benefits and the effect of rises in the minimum wage on the attractiveness of employing young people.

The Baroness Sherlock OBE: The Young People and Work Report will take a holistic view to identify any and all of the factors that may be driving the increase in the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training.

The Report's Call for Evidence, launched on 16 December, is seeking evidence and insight to answer two questions:

1. What is stopping more young people from participating in employment, education or training?
2. What would make the biggest difference to support more young people to participate?

In answering these questions, the report's Call for Evidence has asked for insight and evidence on a range of potential factors, including:

- The benefits and employment support systems

- The changing nature of the labour market and work,
- Any changes in the aspirations and attitudes of young people and employers

The Right Honourable Alan Milburn will author the report. He will share his interim findings with Government in Spring 2026, with final recommendations in Summer 2026.

Sector news

Universities UK's response to the CUC review of higher education governance

UUK has responded to the CUC review of higher education governance.

UUK welcomes the review, which aligns with both the UUK Blueprint and the UK government's Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper. In a complex and changing environment, university governance plays a crucial role. The code must be flexible enough to respond to regulatory and legislative developments and facilitate a co-regulatory approach.

Summary of response:

- UUK welcomes the CUC review, which aligns with both the UUK Blueprint and the UK government's Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper.
- In a complex and changing environment, university governance plays a crucial role.
- The code must be flexible enough to respond to regulatory and legislative developments and facilitate a co-regulatory approach.
- UUK's work to date suggests that good governance is fundamentally about people and behaviours rather than processes, and we can learn lessons from the past, including from the Gillies report into governance and management at the University of Dundee. UUK encourages CUC to promote dialogue and share learning between UK nations, which have different regulatory and policy environments.
- UUK members have suggested priorities for inclusion in an updated code, which should be concise, principles-based and backed by a strong implementation plan. Wider priorities for the code include setting clear roles, articulating behaviours that demonstrate a collegiate culture with clear support mechanisms, increasing visibility of good governance, and enough flexibility to leave room for innovation.
- It will be crucial to implement the code effectively. UUK is calling on CUC to update support and training for governing bodies, publish good practice and evaluates implementation. UUK will support the implementation of the code

by promoting it amongst our membership, engaging our members around key themes, including through our transformation and efficiency programme.

You can [read the full response](#).

Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Advance Translational Research

A new report by HEPI and Taylor & Francis explores the potential of AI to advance translational research and accelerate the journey from scientific discovery to real-world application.

Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Advance Translational Research (HEPI Policy Note 67) draws on discussions at a roundtable of higher education leaders, researchers, AI innovators and funders, as well as a range of research case studies, to evaluate the future role of AI in translational research.

Key findings

The report finds that AI has the potential to strengthen the UK's translational research system, but that realising these benefits will require careful implementation, appropriate governance and sustained investment.

Key findings include:

- **AI could accelerate translational research** by enabling faster analysis of large and complex datasets, supporting knowledge synthesis and improving links between disciplines. However, the availability and quality of such datasets remain uneven, limiting the ability of AI tools to support research translation in some fields.
- **Access to AI skills and expertise is increasingly important** and building this access into interdisciplinary frameworks will be a key component of driving translational research.
- **AI can improve the accessibility and visibility of research**, including through plain-language summaries, semantic search (search functions that utilise concepts and ideas and not simply keywords, giving a more accurate result) and new formats aimed at audiences beyond academia.
- **There are clear risks associated with AI use**, including challenges around reproducibility, bias, deskilling, academic integrity, intellectual property and accountability.

Recommendations

To ensure AI supports high-quality and responsible translational research, the report makes recommendations for research funders, institutions and publishers, including:

- **Setting clear expectations for the responsible use of AI**, including alignment with guidance such as the UK Research Integrity Office's *Embracing AI with Integrity*.
- **Investing in trustworthy and ethical AI**, including work to improve transparency, reduce bias and support reproducibility.
- **Strengthening support for interdisciplinary research**, including better recognition of team-based work and clearer routes to access AI expertise.
- **Supporting shared and open AI research infrastructure** to reduce duplication and make researcher-developed tools more widely available.
- **Encouraging data sharing and reuse**, alongside investment in infrastructure that supports secure and responsible access to data.

You can [read the full report](#).

Committee launch new inquiry on tackling youth NEET crisis

The cross-party Work and Pensions Committee has launched a new inquiry examining the causes and impacts of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) and measures to fix it.

Tackling the NEET challenge for people under-25 is a priority for the Government after youth unemployment hit 15.3%, its highest point in the last decade outside the pandemic and five times higher than the rate across the workforce. Overall, the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training has increased 50% over the last 5 years to 946,000.

Call for evidence

Those who want to give evidence can do so by answering any of the questions set out on the Committee's evidence submission portal before 16.00 on 12 February 2026.

You can [read the full announcement](#).