



The All-Party Parliamentary **University Group**

8 – 12 November 2021

University APPG weekly update

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

For any queries, please contact:

Issy Cooke

appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk

[Click on the items in the Table of Contents to go straight to the debates, answers, forthcoming business, etc.](#)

Table of Contents

Parliamentary Business	3
Westminster Hall Debate on Nightclub Safety	3
Forthcoming business.....	3
Skills and Post-16 Education Bill Second Reading	3
Lords question on adopting a formal definition of Islamophobia	3
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy oral questions	3
Lords question on the resignation of Professor Kathleen Stock.....	3
ARIA Bill Committee Stage	4
Liaison Committee session with Prime Minister, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP	4
Adjournment Debate: British Council and opportunities for Global Britain	4
Lords debate on the role of universities in supply and education of new teachers	4
Written Questions	4
Numbers on a study visa who were granted settled status	4
UK Shared Prosperity Fund research and innovation focus	5
Funding allocated to climate science and research	5
Assessment of the potential effect of extending the £22b spending target to 2026-7	5
Domestic workforce of STEM professionals and UK as an attractive destination for researchers.....	5
Skills strategy for training and courses to meet workforce demand	6
Accuracy of employment statistics by private higher education providers	7
Antisemitism on university campuses.....	8
Migration Advisory Committee Impact of International Students in the UK report.....	8
Sector News.....	9
Chief executive of the Office for Students to leave office in April 2022	9
Science and Innovation initiatives announced at COP26	9
Office for Students publish list of providers now signed up to IHRA definition	9
Office for Students launch consultation on strategy for 2022-2025.....	10
Contingency plans to support students in the events exams cannot go ahead in 2022	10

Parliamentary Business

Westminster Hall Debate on Nightclub Safety

On Monday 8 November, the House of Commons considered an e-petition to 'make it a legal requirement for nightclubs to thoroughly search guests on entry'.

Tonia Antoniazzi MP (Lab) who moved the petition noted anecdotal evidence that A&E departments had seen a rise in cases of spiking as a result of university terms starting. She also drew attention to the 'Big Night In' initiative that has been supported by students' unions and university sports teams.

Rushanara Ali MP (Lab) asked whether universities were falling short of their responsibility by providing healthcare in clinics 24/7 and called on Universities UK to come together and address some of the challenges at university level in order to support students.

Shadow Universities Minister, Matt Western MP, agreed there was an urgent need for the data, but also for multi-agency meetings with the local authorities, the police, and universities.

You can read a transcript of the debate [here](#).

Forthcoming business

Skills and Post-16 Education Bill Second Reading

On Monday 15 November, the House of Commons will debate the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill in Second Reading.

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

Lords question on adopting a formal definition of Islamophobia

On Monday 15 November, Conservative peer Lord Sheikh will ask a question on the government's position on adopting a formal definition of Islamophobia.

You can watch the question [here](#).

Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy oral questions

On Tuesday 16 November, the Secretary of State at the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, and his ministerial team will answer questions in the Commons.

Conservative MP Peter Aldous has tabled an oral question on steps being taken to increase funding for research and development.

You can see the questions tabled [here](#) and watch the debate [here](#).

Lords question on the resignation of Professor Kathleen Stock

On Tuesday 16 November, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab) will ask a question on what assessment the government has made of the circumstances behind the resignation of Professor Kathleen Stock from her post at Sussex University; and what plans they have, if any, to establish a review into freedom of speech in universities.

You can watch the question [here](#).

ARIA Bill Committee Stage

On Wednesday 17 November at 4:15pm, Lords will consider the Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill in the Committee Stage (Day 1).

The Committee stage involves detailed line by line examination of each of the separate parts of the Bill. Every clause of the Bill has to be agreed to and votes on any amendments can take place.

You can find the Bill [here](#), amendments to be moved in the Grand Committee [here](#), and you can watch [here](#).

Liaison Committee session with Prime Minister, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP

On Wednesday 17 November at 3pm, the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP, will provide oral evidence to the Liaison Committee.

You can watch the session [here](#).

Adjournment Debate: British Council and opportunities for Global Britain

On Thursday 18 November, there will be an adjournment debate in the Commons on the 'British Council and opportunities for Global Britain'. The debate will be led by Conservative MP John Baron.

You can watch the debate [here](#).

Lords debate on the role of universities in supply and education of new teachers

On Thursday 18 November, there will be a Lords debate on the 'Government's policy on Initial Teacher Training, including the recruitment of new teachers, and the role of universities and other bodies, in ensuring the supply and education of new teacher.'

You can watch the debate [here](#).

Written Questions

Numbers on a study visa who were granted settled status

Lord Green of Deddington: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people who originally came to the UK on a study visa were granted settled status under the 10 year long-term residency rule in each of the past five years. [HL3482]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Such data is not currently held in a reportable way and to gather it could only be achieved at a disproportionate cost.

Lord Green of Deddington: To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people who originally came to the UK on a study visa were later granted limited leave to remain in each of the past five years. [HL3481]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Such data is not currently held in a reportable way and to gather it could only be achieved at a disproportionate cost.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund research and innovation focus

Chi Onwurah: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will ensure that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund includes a research and innovation focus. [68261]

Paul Scully: The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) will help people access opportunity in places in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities, and for people in disadvantaged groups across the UK.

Further details on the UKSPF will be published in due course.

Funding allocated to climate science and research

Rachael Maskell: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding he has allocated to climate science and research in each year since 2010.

Paul Scully: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) estimates that around £116 million per annum has been committed over the last ten years through their Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) into research related to climate science. In addition funding for the Met Office Hadley Centre Climate Programme has almost doubled since 2010

Assessment of the potential effect of extending the £22b spending target to 2026-7

Chi Onwurah: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the potential effect on (a) private investment and (b) the Government's ambition to be a world leader in science investment of extending the target of spending £22 billion per year on research and development from 2024 to 2026-7. [68260]

Paul Scully: The Government is providing the fastest ever sustained uplift in R&D funding, reaching £20bn per annum by the end of the SR period – £5bn more than 2021/22. We remain committed to the target of UK economy-wide R&D investment reaching 2.4% of GDP by 2027. The UK already has world-class science and research and is ranked as one of the most innovative countries in the world.

Domestic workforce of STEM professionals and UK as an attractive destination for researchers

Chi Onwurah: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) increase the domestic workforce of STEM professionals and (b) maintain the UK as an attractive destination to overseas researchers. [68259]

Paul Scully: The record level of investment announced for the UK research base at the Spending Review lays the strong foundation to realise our ambition to make the UK the most exciting place in the world for top research and innovation talent.

In July, the Government published the R&D People and Culture Strategy, which sets out our actions to attract, retain and develop talented people, making sure R&D careers in the UK are appealing to talented individuals and teams both domestically and internationally.

In line with the strategy, we are working with the Home Office to drive reforms to improve high skilled migration routes for innovators, entrepreneurs and top talent and we are working with the Office for Talent to launch an online service to attract highly skilled, international talent. The strategy recognises the need to identify skills gaps, anticipate future needs, and ensure we have the workforce the UK needs, and commits to action to support STEM education and careers.

Chi Onwurah (Newcastle upon Tyne Central): To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to (a) improve the domestic workforce of STEM professionals and (b) maintain the UK as an attractive destination to overseas researchers; and what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the financial barriers preventing talented researchers from relocating to the UK. [67149]

George Freeman (Mid Norfolk): The record level of investment announced for the UK research base at the Spending Review lays the strong foundation to realise our ambition to make the UK the most exciting place in the world for top research and innovation talent.

In July, the Government published the R&D People and Culture Strategy, which sets out our actions to attract, retain and develop talented people, making sure R&D careers in the UK are appealing to talented individuals and teams both domestically and internationally. It recognises the need to identify skills gaps, anticipate future needs, and ensure we have the workforce the UK needs, and commits to action to support STEM education and careers.

In line with the strategy, we are working with the Home Office to drive reforms to improve high skilled migration routes for innovators, entrepreneurs and top talent, and we are working with the Office for Talent to launch an online service to attract highly skilled, international talent.

Skills strategy for training and courses to meet workforce demand

Rachael Maskell (York Central): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the Government's skills strategy prioritises training and courses that meet the workforce demands for the future. [67202]

Alex Burghart (Brentwood and Ongar): The department published the 'Skills for Jobs' White Paper in January 2021, setting out our blueprint to reform post-16 education and training, focusing on giving people the skills they need in a way that suits them.

The white paper sets out that we are putting employers at the heart of the skills system so that education and training meets their needs. By 2030, almost all technical courses will be on employer-led standards, ensuring that the education and training people receive are directly linked to the skills needed for jobs. This builds on the success of our flagship apprenticeships programme where industry designed standards equip apprentices with the skills employers need and our work on developing new T Levels, which has involved over 250 employers in their design.

It also set out our aim to give employers a central role working with further education colleges, other providers and local stakeholders to develop new Local Skills Improvement Plans as part of the Skills Accelerator, which shape technical skills provision so that it meets local labour market skills needs. These will be launched in a number of trailblazer areas and be led by accredited Chambers of Commerce and other employer representative bodies in collaboration with local providers. We will engage employer and provider groups to ensure we create the most effective models of employer representation before wider rollout.

Following the Wolf Review which found that the content of many qualifications was not valued by employers, the department is streamlining and improving the quality of the post-16 level 3 system. We are strengthening the pathways to progression, creating clearly defined academic and technical routes with qualifications leading to further study, and/or skilled employment. Our proposed landscape – with employers at the heart and a much greater focus on quality – will serve all students better.

We announced in the recent Spending Review that we are investing £3.8 billion in further education and skills, to ensure people can access high-quality training and education that leads to good jobs,

addresses current and future skills gaps, boosts productivity, and supports levelling up. This builds on the range of skills policies that we have introduced to improve skills at all levels.

The introduction of T Levels will boost access to high quality technical education for thousands of 16 to 19 year olds, representing a once in a lifetime opportunity to reform technical education in this country, put it on a par with the best in the world and offer young people a real choice of high-quality training that is equal in esteem to traditional academic routes.

We are providing an extra £1.6 billion boost for 16 to 19 year old's education, including maintaining funding in real terms per student and delivering more hours of teaching for T Levels.

We are committed to supporting more people to benefit from the high-quality training that apprenticeships offer, including those at the start of their career or those looking to retrain, and as my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, set out at the Spending Review, funding for apprenticeships will grow to £2.7 billion by the 2024/25 financial year, delivering the first increase to employer-led apprenticeships funding since the 2019/20 financial year. We are also investing over £550 million by the 2024/25 financial year to make sure adults can upskill to reach their potential, delivering on the National Skills Fund commitment.

Many people lack the basic numeracy skills they need and that is why we have introduced 'Multiply', a new £560 million programme to help people improve their basic numeracy skills through free digital training, flexible courses, and tutoring. Launching in spring 2022, the Multiply programme is in addition to the England -wide statutory entitlement for numeracy and will give people who do not have at least a GCSE grade C/4 or equivalent in mathematics access to free, new and flexible courses to improve their maths skills. This will include a new website with bitesize training and online tutorials, as well as flexible courses.

Accuracy of employment statistics by private higher education providers

Andrew Percy (Brigg and Goole): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the accuracy of statistics on (a) employment and (b) further education used by private higher education providers when advertising their courses to self-funded students. [68199]

Alex Burghart (Brentwood and Ongar): The government is clear that we expect providers to ensure they are fully complying with their consumer law obligations, including ensuring any advertisement of courses is accurate and transparent.

Where a private higher education (HE) provider chooses to register with the Office for Students (OfS), the regulator plays an important role in ensuring students are better able to exercise their consumer rights. It is an OfS registration condition that providers have due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law. It is a further condition that all registered providers co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, and that they make students aware of their ability to use the scheme.

In addition, the OfS aims to ensure that all students can access, succeed in, and progress from higher education by ensuring students have access to relevant information to help them make choices that are right for them, and to also ensure students will receive a baseline level of quality. Statistics about student outcomes at OfS regulated providers are included in 'Discover Uni', which is owned and operated by the UK higher education funding and regulatory bodies and is an official, reliable source of information to guide student choices.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published advice on consumer law for all HE providers (including those not on the OfS register), setting out its view on how the law operates to help students understand their rights and help providers treat their students fairly. This is available via the following link [here](#). The CMA has been clear that there are obligations under the law and providers must ensure they are meeting them.

The Advertising Standards Authority is the UK's independent self-regulator of advertising across all media. Its work includes acting on complaints and proactively checking the media to take action against misleading, harmful or offensive advertisements that contravene its Advertising Codes. The Advertising Codes cover advertising and marketing communications, which are likely to include HE providers' course information on websites, leaflets and posters directed at prospective students.

Antisemitism on university campuses

Dr Lisa Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what policies the Government has in place to tackle antisemitism (a) on university campuses and (b) in the broader education system; and what steps the Government is taking with academic institutions to improve the safety of British Jewish students. [69123]

Michelle Donelan: There is no place in our society, including within our education system, for antisemitism. The government has acted over a number of years to send a clear message that antisemitism will not be tolerated in our schools, colleges, and higher education (HE) institutions.

The government's action on antisemitism in HE has included working closely with Universities UK (UUK), and the Office for Students (OfS) as sector regulator. UUK recently published a briefing on tackling antisemitism in HE, which includes recommending adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. Adopting the widely recognised definition sends a strong signal that HE providers take these issues seriously and is an important tool in tackling antisemitism.

The former Secretary of State for Education wrote to the sector in October 2020, calling upon leaders to adopt the IHRA definition. He repeated this message in May 2021, reinforcing the government's expectation that providers adopt the IHRA definition, stressing the even greater importance of doing so in light of an increased number of antisemitic incidents recorded as a result of the conflict in the Middle East.

In addition, in his February 2021 strategic guidance letter, the former Secretary of State for Education asked the OfS to undertake a scoping exercise, to identify providers which are reluctant to adopt the definition. In response to this, on 10 November 2021 the OfS published a list of providers who have adopted the definition. I am pleased to report good progress in the last year: an increase from around 30 to over 200 providers having adopted the IHRA definition. This includes the vast majority of universities. The list is available [here](#).

The decision on adoption of the definition rests with individual providers, but the government will continue to urge them to adopt the definition and ensure that HE is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

The government is also committed to stamping out antisemitism in schools. On 28 May, the former Secretary of State for Education wrote to all schools to reiterate that pupils and staff must be kept safe, and there is absolutely no place for hate and prejudice. This intervention was a clear message that this government will not tolerate antisemitism in our schools and will act where necessary to tackle it.

The government has also continued to take action to support schools in this area, including providing over £3.5 million of funding to anti-bullying organisations like the Anne Frank Trust, between 2016 and 2021. We are currently running a procurement exercise to fund activity in 2021-22, to make sure that schools have the right support in place to prevent bullying.

Any form of antisemitism is abhorrent, and I will continue to work tirelessly to ensure it is eradicated from our world-leading education system.

Migration Advisory Committee Impact of International Students in the UK report

Lord Green of Deddington: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Migration Advisory Committee Impact of International Students in the UK, published in September 2018, and in particular the conclusion that "it is likely that those who would benefit from a longer period to find a graduate level job are not the most highly skilled". [HL3520]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government strongly wishes to attract international students to study in the UK. They enhance our educational institutions both financially and culturally; they enrich the experience of domestic students; and they can become important ambassadors for the United Kingdom in later life. The Graduate route significantly enhances our offer to international students and the attractiveness of the UK as a world-leading destination for higher education.

The Government at the time, set out its response to the recommendation of the Migration Advisory Committee. However, following the UK's exit from the EU and the launch of our new points-based system, the introduction of the Graduate route demonstrates our global outlook and support for the UK's education sector. The route will also help us realise our ambition, as set out in the International Education Strategy, to increase UK education exports to £35 billion and the number of international higher education students to 600,000 by 2030.

This Government has set out its assessment of the impact of the route. This can be found on the gov.uk website or through the following link [here](#).

Sector News

Chief executive of the Office for Students to leave office in April 2022

On Tuesday 9 November, the Office for Students announced that its Chief Executive, Nicola Dandridge, will leave the organisation at the end of April 2022.

You can find the press release [here](#).

Science and Innovation initiatives announced at COP26

On Tuesday 9 November at the Science and Innovation Day at COP26, Government Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance announced new science and innovation initiatives to reduce emissions in line with Paris temperature targets and to adapt to the effects of climate change.

These initiatives include:

- new commitments to accelerate innovation and low carbon transitions in industry and cities
- new global Adaptation Research Alliance to increase the resilience of vulnerable communities on the frontline of climate change
- independent experts to track progress against the Breakthrough Agenda announced by world leaders on 2 November, advising on action and collaboration
- global scientific research community to produce annual climate risk assessment to ensure the dangers are fully understood by world leaders

You can find details of the initiatives [here](#).

Office for Students publish list of providers now signed up to IHRA definition

On Wednesday 10 November, the Office for Students published figures of the universities, colleges and other higher education providers that have signed up to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. A total of 95 universities have now signed up to the definition.

Alongside the list of providers that have publicly confirmed they have adopted the definition, the OfS has published a range of case studies and resources designed to help universities and colleges to tackle antisemitism on campus.

You can find out more information [here](#).

Office for Students launch consultation on strategy for 2022-2025

On Thursday 11 November, the Office for Students launched a consultation on its proposed strategy for 2022-2025. The consultation proposes a plan of action that will guide our activities as a regulator over the next three years.

The proposals identify two areas of focus: quality and standards, and equality of opportunity. They also cover their objectives and goals for the period, how they intend to deliver them, and a minor addition to the regulatory framework.

The deadline for responses is 6 January 2022.

You can find the consultation document [here](#).

Contingency plans to support students in the events exams cannot go ahead in 2022

On Thursday 11 November, the government and Ofqual confirmed the contingency plans to support students in the event that exams in England cannot go ahead next year due to the pandemic.

Following a consultation, the department and qualifications regulator Ofqual have confirmed students would receive Teacher Assessed Grades based on a range of their work, similar to this summer.

Ofqual also published guidance for teachers on how they should collect evidence of students' work during the academic year.

You can find the guidance [here](#).