



The All-Party Parliamentary **University Group**



Dear Colleague,

This will be the last update of the year as Parliament heads for Recess early next week and I know many universities are winding down for the holiday period. The pace of developments in the sector have been quite astounding this year, with Brexit and immigration intrigue and the Higher Education and Research Bill, plus additional turmoil in Scotland and Wales. I hope that the group has helped to add value to these debates by facilitating discussions on Brexit and the Bill in recent months. We are in the middle of compiling a paper written by MPs on how the sector will be affected by Brexit which we will be sharing with the Minister and parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the House will be using in the debates in the months to come. I'm grateful to all who got in touch to provide the group with additional information and hope to share the paper with you all after the Christmas break.

Our last meeting of the year took place earlier this month, a highly informative and interesting discussion, led by our co-Chair Lord Norton of Louth and with excellent contributions from Professor Steve West and Dr Anne Haase. A subject truly of interest across the political party divide, the meeting had representation from the Lib Dems, Labour, Conservative and SNP parliamentarians. You can read the note of the meeting on our website and the group hope to follow up this work in a future meeting.

We return for our next meeting on 31 January which will be on the Government's industrial strategy and how universities and our science and research can be involved in every aspect of its development and implementation. Formal invites will be sent in the first week of January and I hope to see many of you there.

Finally, if any member of the group has an opinion or particular piece of work that they would like to share I just wanted to leave you with a reminder that the group's blog is up and running and hopefully provides you with a direct opportunity to share directly with both sector and parliamentary colleagues.

I hope you all have a wonderful festive period.

Roberta Blackman-Woods MP

Chair, All-Party Parliamentary University Group

All-Party Parliamentary University Group
c/o Kate Jackson, Universities UK, Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HQ
Tel: 020 7419 5621 appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk

Upcoming meetings

Tuesday 31 January 2017

Industrial Strategy

6-7.30pm, Committee Room 4, followed by dinner

Professor Quintin McKellar, Vice-Chancellor, University of Hertfordshire

Tuesday 7 March 2017

Social mobility

6-7.30pm, Committee Room 4, followed by dinner

Wednesday 10 May 2017

Higher level skills

8.30-10am, Dining Room B

Tuesday 20 June 2017

Devolution

6-7.30pm, Committee Room 4, followed by dinner

This update is produced by Universities UK. It provides links to all relevant parliamentary business and sector announcements for the previous week and notes upcoming business. The APPG council have also suggested that university members may like to suggest inclusions from their institutions, such as major reports, speeches or events. If you did wish to do so, please do get in touch.

The University APPG twitter account ([@universityappg](https://twitter.com/@universityappg)) will also be tweeting updates of parliamentary business and sector announcements. We would encourage all members to follow the account.

The University APPG blog is now up and running and I would like to encourage members who may be interested in writing a piece to please get in touch.

Table of Contents

Forthcoming Business	4
Department for Education Oral Questions	4
Debate on exiting the EU and science and research	4
Lords EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee	4
Recess.....	4
The Higher Education and Research Bill	4
Amendments.....	4
Lords Committee Stage.....	4
Lords Oral Questions	4
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Oral Questions	5
Science and Technology Committee	7
Written questions	7
Health professions: Training	7
Universities: standards.....	7
Switching degree.....	8
Postgraduate education.....	8
Student Loans Company: Staff.....	8
University title.....	8
Overseas students.....	8
Universities: Northern Powerhouse	8
Disadvantaged students.....	8
Teachers: Training.....	8
Sector News	8
Department for Education Consultation.....	8
UCAS End of Cycle Report	9

Forthcoming Business

Department for Education Oral Questions

The Education Secretary and Ministers face oral questions on Monday 19 December from 2.30pm with topicals from 3.15pm.

Debate on exiting the EU and science and research

Following oral questions on Monday 19 January, there will be a debate of the whole house on Brexit and science and research.

Lords EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee

- On Wednesday 21 January from 10am the Committee will take evidence for its inquiry on Brexit: UK-EU movement of people. Hearing from witnesses:
- Ian Cope, Acting Deputy National Statistician, Population and Public Policy, and
- Paul Vickers, Head of Population Statistics Outputs, Office for National Statistics

Recess

On Tuesday 20 and Wednesday 21 December, the House of Commons and the House of Lords respectfully rise for Christmas Recess, returning Monday 9 January.

The Higher Education and Research Bill

On Tuesday 6 December the Bill entered the House of Lords and completed its Second Reading stage. The Bill as it stands was discussed. This was the first opportunity for members of the Lords to debate the key principles and main purpose of a bill and to flag up any concerns or specific areas where they think amendments are needed. Around 70 peers spoke during the debate which lasted for around 8 hours. You can read the full transcript [here](#).

Amendments

Peers continue to lay amendments ahead of the Committee Stage, which will take place on the floor of the House.

Lords Committee Stage

The Bill returns to the House of Lords for its committee stage on **Monday 9 January 2017**.

Lords Oral Questions

On Wednesday 14 December Lord Holmes of Richmond (Conservative) asked Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to amend the visa requirements for international students and to remove those students from the immigration figures. You can read the full transcript [here](#).

On Thursday 15 December Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (Labour) asked Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to ensure that the higher education sector is represented in all of the Brexit negotiations. You can read the full transcript [here](#).

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Oral Questions

On Tuesday 15 December BEIS Ministers answered oral questions in the House. There was an exchange on science and research, detailed below, and you can read the full transcript [here](#).

Adam Afriyie (Windsor) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to promote science and innovation.

The Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Joseph Johnson): This Government are strongly committed to science and innovation. We protected the science budget at the spending review in 2015. In the last autumn statement, a few days ago, we committed to spending a further £2 billion a year by the end of this Parliament. The creation of UK Research and Innovation, through the passage of the Higher Education and Research Bill, will increase the value and impact of our investments in science and innovation in the years ahead.

Adam Afriyie: I thank the Minister for that answer. It has certainly been a good time for science and innovation in Britain. It has also been a good year for the UK space sector, with Major Tim Peake's historic visit to the international space station and a new spaceport here in the UK. It certainly strikes me that the next big challenge will be the successful delivery of the ExoMars programme, particularly given some of the rumours that have been going around. Will the Minister update the House on any progress made at the European Space Agency summit recently?

Joseph Johnson: Yes, I am happy to provide a brief update. My hon. Friend is an aficionado of space policy and former chair of the parliamentary space committee, so he will be delighted to know that we had an excellent outcome at the European Space Agency's Council of Ministers. We committed a further €1.44 billion, which has secured the future of the ExoMars programme, among many other things.

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): I do not want to ruin the Minister's Christmas celebrations, which are imminent, but if he looks at the deplorable investment in research and development—the figures that came out only this week—does he not see that he needs to wake up and smell the coffee? The fact of the matter is that research and innovation will be deeply damaged by leaving the European Union. He should ask the universities what they think.

Joseph Johnson: I know that the hon. Gentleman will welcome the Government's commitment to research and development, which was underscored in the autumn statement with a further £2

billion by the end of this Parliament—perhaps the biggest single increase in R and D expenditure by any Government in the memory of anyone in this Parliament.

Mr Alan Mak (Havant) (Con): Innovate UK plays a key role in promoting science and technology by giving grants to entrepreneurs. Will the Minister continue to support it as new fourth industrial revolution businesses come forward to seek new funding to develop the next generation of science and technology businesses?

Joseph Johnson: Yes, I am happy to provide that assurance. Innovate UK, our innovation agency, will be at the heart of our industrial strategy, and the autumn statement will provide it with the resources it needs to continue to do its job of supporting small businesses in innovation.

Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC): Tidal Lagoon Power’s report, “Ours to own”, anticipates that tidal lagoons could bring more than £70 billion to the UK industry. Swansea bay tidal lagoon is key to unlocking that innovative potential, which has great opportunities for Cardiff and the north Wales coast, as well. I appreciate that the Minister will have concerns about costs to customers, but will he commit to weighing up all aspects of the energy trilemma in his response to the Hendry report?

Joseph Johnson: We are looking very carefully at the report and will be coming forward with our response in due course.

Dr James Davies (Vale of Clwyd) (Con): Chemical and pharmaceutical businesses are an important feature of the northern powerhouse and emerging enterprises in the sector are often rooted in university research labs. What support and funding can the UK Government commit to encourage continued research collaboration across Europe—and indeed the rest of the world—to increase our innovative business base post-Brexit?

Joseph Johnson: We support international collaboration in science and research in Europe, and indeed around the world, and will continue to do so.

Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (SNP): The Government talk about promoting science and innovation, but this Government pulled the plug on funding for carbon capture and storage. How much of the additional £4.7 billion R and D money announced in the autumn statement will be allocated for carbon capture and storage?

Joseph Johnson: We will consult the sector and the science community very carefully as part of our development of the industrial strategy, in a discussion paper that we will launch in the weeks to come.

Derek Twigg (Halton) (Lab): The Catalyst science discovery centre in my constituency does an excellent job of promoting careers in science and engineering for young people. Will the Minister come and visit it? It struggles to keep going financially, but it does an absolutely unbelievably good job.

Joseph Johnson: I commend the good work going on in the hon. Gentleman's constituency and look forward to an opportunity to visit that centre as and when it arises.

Science and Technology Committee

On Tuesday 15 December the Commons Committee published a report following its investigation into the role and priorities of the UKRI Interim Chair.

- The soon to be appointed CEO of UKRI will be critical for making a success of the new organisation
- The Government will need to take great care in appointing the UKRI Board to ensure it has the right balance of experience of innovation and research
- The new chair of UKRI will have to address the various concerns that the science and innovation sector has raised about the Government's plans for UKRI. Concerns expressed during the inquiry included:
 - Dual support funding – the Haldane principle and the separate distribution of research council 'quality related' funding and HEFCE block grants, which will in future be managed within the same UKRI organisation.
 - Council autonomy – the influence of the individual councils in UKRI.
 - Innovation and research – the interaction and funding for innovation and research within UKRI.
 - Teaching and research – the relationship between research and teaching through the remits of the Office for Students and UKRI, and between DfE and BEIS.
 - Governance – the role of the UKRI board and its CEO and Chair.

You can see the Committee [press release here](#) and the [full report here](#).

Written questions

The answers to written questions can be found by clicking the name of the MP or Lord beneath the title. Members may appear more than once if they have asked several questions on the same topic.

Health professions: Training

[Lord Hunt of Kings Heath](#)

[Justin Madders MP](#)

[Norman Lamb MP](#)

Universities: standards

[Lord Harris of Haringey](#)

Switching degree

Baroness Garden of Frognal
Gordon Marsden MP

Postgraduate education

Stephen Timms MP

Student Loans Company: Staff

Gordon Marsden MP

University title

Baroness Wolf of Dulwich

Overseas students

The Lord Bishop of Winchester
The Lord Bishop of Winchester
Gordon Marsden MP
The Lord Bishop of Winchester
Paul Blomfield MP
Paul Blomfield MP

Universities: Northern Powerhouse

Peter Kyle MP

Disadvantaged students

Stephen Timms MP
Royston Smith MP

Teachers: Training

Baroness Donaghy

Sector News**Department for Education Consultation**

On Wednesday 13 December DfE announced a consultation on Office for Students registration fees for HE providers.

You can see the consultation document: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/he-landscape-reform/office-for-students-registration-fees/>. DfE will accept submissions until 14 March 2015 at 5pm.

The consultation specifically covers:

- how to calculate the registration fee that registered higher education providers (like universities and further education colleges offering higher education) will pay to the Office for Students (OfS)
- examples of where the OfS could use its power to charge other fees
- how government funding to the OfS could work

UCAS End of Cycle Report

On Thursday 15 December UCAS released its End of Cycle Report, you can find the full document at: <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis/ucas-undergraduate-releases/ucas-undergraduate-analysis-reports>

You can read some the sector responses to the report by following the links below:

- Universities UK - <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/Record-numbers-of.aspx>
 - MillionPlus - <http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/news/press-releases/millionplus-comment-on-the-ucas-end-of-cycle-report-2016>
 - University Alliance - <http://www.unialliance.ac.uk/blog/2016/12/15/ua-responds-to-ucas-end-of-cycle-report-2016/>
-