



The All-Party Parliamentary **University Group**



Dear Colleague,

We've made it to the end of the parliamentary and the university year. It's been one of the more interesting periods in recent parliamentary history and we are left with a lot of changes and some things that remain the same.

Higher Education policy has returned to the Department for Education, but Science and Research remains with the newly formed Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Jo Johnson MP remains the Minister for Universities and Science although his role will now of course be split between the two departments.

The Higher Education and Research Bill also continues, the **Second Reading** of which took place on Tuesday 19 July and it moves onto Committee Stage in September. Members of the group from both Houses look forward to scrutinising the Bill as it makes its way through Parliament.

The group has had many successful meetings over the last year culminating in our Summer Reception last month where we heard from the Minister for Universities and Science and the Shadow Minister for Higher Education. We intend to keep this work going and to provide a number of opportunities for all members to discuss the topical issues which are affecting the sector at the moment. The groups next meeting dates are below, please do put this in diaries and come along. If you have an opinion to share, or information that you think group members would find useful, please do send this onto the Secretariat who can ensure that this is passed to all members, or provide the group with a blog post that we can publicise on your behalf. In a tricky time for the sector with the first major piece of legislation since 1992 the more information that parliamentarians have to scrutinise the Bill the better.

And finally, I do hope you all have the opportunity for some sort of a summer break. This regular update will be back when the House returns in September.

Roberta Blackman-Woods MP

Chair, All-Party Parliamentary University Group

Tuesday 25 October

Brexit and next steps for the university sector

6.30-7.30pm, Committee Room 3a, followed by dinner in Dining Room B

Speakers to be confirmed

Wednesday 16 November

The Higher Education and Research Bill

6-7.30pm, Committee Room 2a, followed by dinner in Dining Room B

Speakers to be confirmed

Tuesday 6 December

The equalities agenda

8.30-10am, Dining Room B

Speakers to be confirmed

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.

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Forthcoming Business

Summer Recess

The House of Commons and the House of Lords are now in Recess. They will return for a short sitting before Autumn conferences on 5 September.

Higher Education and Research Bill: Public bill committee

The first sessions of the public bill committee for the Higher Education and Research Bill have been announced. The committee will be meeting to take evidence at 9.25am and 2.00pm on Tuesday 6 September, and at 11.45am and 2.00pm on Thursday 8 September. The committee will conclude its considerations on 18 October at the latest.

The committee has issued a call for evidence to inform its work, which can be viewed [here](#).

Westminster Hall debate on the educational performance of boys

On 6 September Karl McCartney MP will lead a debate in Westminster Hall on the educational performance of boys.

Higher Education and Research Bill

On 19 September the House of Commons gave the Higher Education and Research Bill its second reading. The full transcript of the debate is available [here](#).

Many members raised the impact of Brexit on the university sector, and questioned whether the Bill should be delayed to allow for this to be fully considered. A number of Labour members raised concerns about what they saw as a lack of focus in the Bill on a number of challenges facing the country in relation to higher education, in particular social mobility and technical education. Conservative members cited in particular the bill's provisions relating to teaching quality and opening the higher education market to more providers in supporting it. The Scottish National Party's spokesperson raised queries relating to how UKRI and the Teaching Excellence Framework will work in a devolved context, among others.

The government has also published a number of documents providing further information on the Bill:

- [Summary Impact Assessment](#)
- [Detailed Impact Assessments](#)
- [Equality Analysis](#)
- [Case for the creation of the Office for Students](#)
- [Case for the creation of UK Research and Innovation \(UKRI\)](#)

Funding and student finance for healthcare education

On 21 July the Department for Health published its response to a consultation on changes to student funding for healthcare education. The summary response is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-for-changing-healthcare-education-funding>

Student finance and tuition fee cap, 2017-18

On 21 July the Department for Education made a written statement setting out levels of student finance and the tuition fee limits that will apply for academic year 2017-18. The statement can be read [here](#). The statement also included details of student finance for students of nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions; military personnel serving overseas and their families; and a further relaxation of ELQ restrictions on student financing for those studying STEM subjects on a part-time basis.

Oral PQ on Brexit and EU staff at Universities

On 20 July Baroness Eccles of Moulton asked an oral question (“how they will ensure that the interests of United Kingdom universities and their students and staff from European Union member states are protected in the current period of uncertainty following the European Union referendum”). Peers asked a number of supplementary questions on the impact of Brexit on universities.

A full transcript is available at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-07-20/debates/16072030000565/BrexitUKUniversities>

Westminster Hall debate on change in terms of student loans

On 18 July Helen Jones MP led a debate in Westminster Hall on the changes that the government has made of the terms applying to student loans (in particular the freeze in the repayment threshold at £21,000). A full transcript is available at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-07-18/debates/16071826000001/StudentLoansAgreement>

Lords Science and Technology Committee: EU membership and science

On 19 July the House of Lord Science and Technology Committee took evidence in a follow-up session to their report [EU Membership and UK Science](#) which was published earlier this year. The witnesses were:

- Professor Alexander Halliday, Royal Society

- Lord Stern of Brentford, British Academy
- Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Royal Society of Edinburgh
- Sharon Witherspoon, Academy of Social Sciences
- Professor Philip Nelson, RCUK
- Ron Mobed, Elsevier

The transcript is not yet available, but should be published shortly on the [committee's website](#) and you can watch the session [here](#).

Machinery of Government changes

The Prime Minister has made a written statement on the 'machinery of government' changes affecting government departments and their remits, with attached supplementary notes. The statement can be read at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-07-18/HCWS94/>

Early Day Motions

EU higher education links

Full text of motion and list of supporting MPs at: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/353>

University of Aberdeen fees guarantee to EU students

Full text of motion and list of supporting MPs at: <http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/365>

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.

Impact of Brexit on universities

Students

[Jamie Reed MP](#)

[Jim Cunningham MP](#)

[David Lammy MP](#)

[Nigel Evans MP](#)

Research

[Daniel Zeichner MP](#)

[Daniel Zeichner MP](#)

[Daniel Zeichner MP](#)

[Jim Cunningham MP](#)

[Lord Cromwell](#)

General

Jim Cunningham MP

Promotion of international character of UK universities

Lord Judd

Progression to HE of pupils on free school meals (North East and England)

Anna Turley MP

Post-study work visas (Scotland)

Natalie McGarry MP

Overseas students (statistics)

Lord Green of Deddington

Stakeholder engagement on healthcare education funding

Luciana Berger MP

Trainee teacher numbers by region

Melanie Onn MP

Proposal to write-off student loans for those entering shortage professions

Norman Lamb MP

Applicant numbers for nursing degrees

Christopher Chope MP
