



# The All-Party Parliamentary University Group



Dear Colleague,

The Higher Education and Research Bill completed its Report and Third Reading stages in the Commons this week, and begins its progress through the House of Lords on Tuesday 6 December. You can find more details about the debates that took place and the amendments that were tabled in the update attached.

Since our last update the group has been working on a number of things, Professor Paul O'Prey our speaker at the October meeting on Brexit has written a [blog](#) for us on his experience following the vote to Leave. Professor Andrew Wathey has kindly shared his [presentation](#) to the APPG last week on the Higher Education and Research Bill, where he has highlighted a number of continuing issues in the Bill for the sector, which I'm sure that my colleagues in the Lords will take up with gusto.

Our next meeting takes place on Tuesday 6 December, where we will look at the impact of social media on mental health. I understand that there little research on social media for specifically university students. Therefore the meeting should be an excellent opportunity for the group to gain a better understanding of mental health issues on campus more generally, an awareness of some research that has been done around young people, and start a discussion of how both groups can do more to address possible problems and utilise possible opportunities.

As you know one of the outcomes of our meeting on Brexit was for the group to develop an issue paper, this would be a combination of short essays, exploring the effect of leaving the EU, both positive and negative, covering research, staff recruitment and student recruitment. The aim would be to identify a list of key questions for those that will be negotiating on behalf of the UK, which APPG parliamentary colleagues can push.

We hope to have a paper prepared ahead of the Christmas Recess and would be very grateful for any examples, both local and national, of how Brexit may affect these areas above. Please could you send these to Kate Jackson ([appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk)) by the end of November.

**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](mailto:appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

## Upcoming meetings

### **Tuesday 6 December**

The impact of social media on the mental health of staff and students

*8.30-10am, Dining Room B*

Professor Steven West, Vice-Chancellor, University of the West of England and Dr Anne Haase, Senior Lecturer, University of Bristol

### **Tuesday 31 January 2017**

Industrial Strategy

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

### **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

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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**

### **Lords Oral Question – Immigration**

On Wednesday 30 November Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench) will ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to outline their objectives for the negotiations concerning the immigration regime for European Union citizens, following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

### **Lords EU Home Affairs Sub-Committee**

Also on Wednesday 30 November, the sub-committee meets to discuss Brexit: UK-EU movement of people from 10.30am. Witnesses:

- Jonathan Portes, Research Fellow, National Institute of Economic and Social Research; and
- Madeleine Sumption, Director, Migration Observatory

### **Exiting the European Union Oral Questions**

On Thursday 1 December from 9.30am, Department for Exiting the European Union ministers answer oral questions. Topicals from 10.15am.

### **Lords Debate – The UK's future relationship with the EU**

On Thursday 1 December, Lord Liddle (Labour) has tabled a debate on the best options for the United Kingdom's future relationship with the European Union following the referendum vote to leave.

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## **The Higher Education and Research Bill**

### **Report and Third Reading**

By 279 to 214 MPs voted to approve Third Reading of the Higher Education and Research Bill this week. All government amendments were accepted into the Bill, while all opposition amendments were rejected. You can read the full debate [here](#).

### **Second reading – House of Lords**

The Bill now enters the House of Lords with the Second Reading due to take place on Tuesday 6 December. The [Bill as it stands](#), including the approved amendments from the Commons, will be discussed in a general debate. This will be 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.

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## **Lords Question: EU scientists**

On Monday 21 November Baroness Andrews (Labour) asked Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the numbers of European Union scientists working on British research programmes, what assessment they have made of the impact of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on medical research and innovation. Baroness Neville-Rolfe responded for the Government, read her response [here](#).

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## **Westminster Hall Debate**

On Wednesday 23 November, Rupa Huq MP (Labour) tabled a debate on the effect of exiting the EU on higher education. Jo Johnson MP responded for the Government. Read the full transcript [here](#).

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## **Autumn Statement**

On Wednesday 23 November the new Chancellor made his first (and last) Autumn Statement. The main news for the sector had already been announced as part of a speech by the Prime Minister to the CBI on Monday 21 November, excerpt from the speech below.

“But today I want to sketch out some of the first steps and spell out some specific things we will do to turn our ambition into reality.

We are ambitious for Britain to become the global go-to place for scientists, innovators and tech investors. We will continue to welcome the brightest and the best – but can only do so by bringing immigration down to sustainable levels overall so we maintain public faith in the system.

Today, Britain has firms and researchers leading in some of the most exciting fields of human discovery. We need to back them and turn research strengths into commercial success.

That means not only investing more in research and development, but ensuring we invest that money wisely. Supporting technologies and sectors that have the potential to deliver long-term benefits for Britain.

In the last Parliament, despite the deficit we inherited, we protected the basic science budget, even when that meant we had to take difficult decisions to control other spending.

But our competitors aren't standing still. They are investing heavily in research and development.

So in the Autumn Statement on Wednesday, we will commit to substantial real terms increases in government investment in R&D - investing an extra £2 billion a year by the end of this Parliament to

help put post-Brexit Britain at the cutting edge of science and tech.

A new Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund will direct some of that investment to scientific research and the development of a number of priority technologies in particular, helping to address Britain's historic weakness on commercialisation and turning our world-leading research into long-term success.

And we will also review the support we give innovative firms through the tax system.

Since 2010 we have made the Research and Development Credit more generous and easier to use – and support has risen from £1bn to almost £2.5 billion a year.

Now we want to go further, and look at how we can make our support even more effective – because my aim is not simply for the UK to have the lowest corporate tax rate in the G20, but also a tax system that is profoundly pro-innovation.”

### **Announcements**

- An extra £4.7 billion over four years from 2017 to 2021 invested in research, development, science and innovation. Therefore, by 2021 there will be an extra £2 billion per year in the science and research budget.
- The tax arrangements for research and development will be reviewed.
- An increase in the inflation forecasts, meaning that the 2.8% increase in fees in 2017-18 will not match the new forecast of 3.6% for RPI-X in Q1 of 2018 (the figure that DfE has chosen to use).
- A ban on letting agent fees, which will have a significant impact on the student rental market.
- New funding for transport infrastructure in the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge 'growth corridor'.
- A confirmation that the sale of the student loan book has once again been delayed.

### **Documents**

The main Autumn Statement document can be found at: <http://bit.ly/2ggFVpk>

A link to the Chancellor's statement can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2glyWJu>

The OBR's forecast can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2fr2UwH>

### **Responses from the sector**

[Universities UK](#) - What the Autumn Statement means for universities

[Research Councils UK](#) - Research Councils' welcome new research funding in the Autumn Statement

[MillionPlus](#) - "A very welcome step forward from the government".

[Russell Group](#) - "The further detail in the Autumn Statement is good news".

[University Alliance](#) - Universities are key partners in industrial strategy

[National Union of Students](#) - What does today's Autumn Statement mean for students?

## 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.

### Higher education: EU grants and loans

[Ian Murray MP](#)

[Jim Cunningham MP](#)

[Jim Cunningham MP](#)

[Jim Cunningham MP](#)

### Overseas students

[Stephen Timms MP](#)

[Stephen Timms MP](#)

[Martyn Day MP](#)

[Martyn Day MP](#)

[Paul Blomfield MP](#)

[Stephen Timms MP](#)

[Stephen Timms MP](#)

[Diana Johnson MP](#)

[Lord Teverson](#)

[Tasmina Ahmed-Shiekh MP](#)

### Immigration: EU nationals

[Ian Murray MP](#)

### Visas: Research

[Royston Smith MP](#)

### EU and non-EU Students

[Jim Cunningham MP](#)

[Jim Cunningham MP](#)

### Higher education: Finance

[Paul Blomfield MP](#)

[Gordon Marsden MP](#)

### Higher level skills gap

[Gordon Marsden MP](#)

### Part-time higher education

[Gordon Marsden MP](#)

### Industrial Strategy

[Chris White MP](#)

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## Sector News

### **Welsh Government to respond to the Diamond Review**

On Wednesday 23 November Welsh Education Secretary Kirsty Williams announced that the Welsh government will accept the majority of the suggestions made in the Diamond Review, which will see Wales introduce some of the most generous student funding in the UK. A new consultation on the full proposals has now been launched.

You can find Kirsty Williams' statement and response to the Diamond Review [here](#).

### **Department for Education Statistics on Initial Teacher Training courses**

DfE published statistics on Thursday 24 November which show a continuing fall in numbers of postgraduate students beginning Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses. Teacher training undertaken in higher education institutions has fallen by 5% in the past year, whilst school-led routes into the profession continue to grow. Undergraduate ITT has also fallen in the past year.

### **Universities UK President 2017-19**

Universities UK (UUK) announced today (Thursday 24 November) that Professor Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, will be the next president of Universities UK.

Professor Beer was elected following a ballot of Universities UK members. She will succeed the current President, Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kent, next year (from 1 August 2017) and will hold the post for two years until July 2019.

Professor Beer has been Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool since 2015. Before that, she spent seven years as Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University. She is currently Vice-President of Universities UK (England and Northern Ireland), Chair of the Board of the Equality Challenge Unit and was a member of the recent taskforce on dealing with violence against women, harassment and hate crime affecting university students. She is also a board member of UCAS, a board member of the National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) and a trustee of the British Council.

Professor Beer has an established record of research and scholarship in late nineteenth and early twentieth century American literature and culture and most recently completed a study of the late writing of Edith Wharton.

Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said: "Janet is widely respected throughout the university sector. With ten years' experience as the head of two universities, and having chaired and served on the boards of some of the sector's main bodies, Janet will bring considerable experience and leadership to the role of UUK President.

"The Brexit negotiations will have considerable implications for UK universities in the coming years. On top of this, the Teaching Excellence Framework, Higher Education Bill and more debates about international student visas means we have our work cut out."



Professor Janet Beer said: “I am delighted and honoured to have been elected President of Universities UK. These are challenging times for our sector and I look forward to working closely with members to ensure that UK higher education grows stronger than ever. That means attracting the best talent, producing well-rounded graduates and cutting-edge research, and making a major contribution to our social and economic development. I welcome the opportunities we will have to build upon the already outstanding work that universities do.”

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