



# The All-Party Parliamentary University Group



Dear Colleague,

As you will have seen we have updated our next meetings for the end of the 2015/16 year. We've got some really interesting topics for discussion, starting with social mobility and BME students next Tuesday. There are so many different programmes and pieces of work going on in this area all around the sector but the Social Mobility Advisory Group is the first time that all the different players including schools, colleges, academics and practitioners are round one table sharing information about the challenges and ideas of how the sector can meet them. I know this is an area that my parliamentary colleagues are interested in understanding further how they can also help to affect change.

Turning to the TEF, I understand that officials in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills are hard at work looking through the responses to the Green Paper consultation and hopefully we will see a response from government soon. But in the meantime [HEPI](#) have put out their thoughts on how a teaching excellence framework should be designed and we should soon be seeing the report by the BIS Select Committee into quality in the sector, so lots of food for thought to keep the sector and parliamentarian busy until the Government responds.

Finally, I just wanted to flag some follow up from the group's last meeting on International Comparisons of Funding. Andreas Schleicher from the OECD has written an excellent [blog](#) on the subject and I would encourage those who have not yet had an opportunity to do so to give it a read.

**Roberta Blackman-Woods MP**

Chair, University APPG

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## Upcoming meetings

### Tuesday 1 March

BME students and social mobility in the higher education sector

*8.30am-10am, Dining Room B, House of Commons*

- Professor Geoff Layer, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
- Professor Anna Vignoles, Professor of Education and Director of Research, University of Cambridge
- Anne-Marie Canning and Niaomi Collett, Director and Deputy Director of Widening Participation, King's College London
- Rt Hon David Lammy, MP for Tottenham

All-Party Parliamentary University Group

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**Tuesday 12 April**

Flexible Pathways: part-time, adult education and lifelong learning  
*8.30am-10am, Dining Room B, House of Commons*  
Peter Horrocks, Vice-Chancellor, The Open University

**Wednesday 25 May**

Students as consumers in their education; where student fees go, how universities explain their financial decisions to students, the public and government (Joint meeting with the APPG on Students)  
*6pm-7.30pm, Committee Room 2a, followed by dinner*  
Speakers to be confirmed

**Tuesday 28 June**

University APPG Summer Reception  
*Churchill Room, times to be confirmed*

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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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## Table of Contents

<b>Forthcoming Business</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee.....	4
All-Party Parliamentary University Group.....	4
Lords Science and Technology Committee .....	4
Westminster Hall Debate.....	4
Estimate Day Debate.....	4
Lords Oral Questions.....	5
<b>Lords oral questions and debates</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Freedom of Speech .....	5
International Students .....	5
<b>Commons Oral Question - Universities: BME students</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Written Questions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Productivity: Standards.....	7
Students: Plagiarism.....	7
Students Unions.....	7
Manufacturing industries: Partnerships with universities.....	7

## **Forthcoming Business**

### **Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee**

The BIS Select Committee is due to publish its report into The Teaching Excellence Framework: Assessing quality in Higher Education on Monday 29 February.

### **All-Party Parliamentary University Group**

On Tuesday 1 March the University APPG will be meeting to discuss BME students and social mobility in the higher education sector. Speakers will include:

- Professor Geoff Layer, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton
- Professor Anna Vignoles, Professor of Education and Director of Research, University of Cambridge
- Anne-Marie Canning and Niaomi Collett, Director and Deputy Director of Widening Participation, King's College London
- Rt Hon David Lammy, MP for Tottenham

### **Lords Science and Technology Committee**

At 10.30am on Tuesday 1 March, the Committee continues its inquiry into the relationship between EU membership and the effectiveness of UK science, taking evidence from:

- Dr Mike Galsworthy, Scientists for EU
- Professor Angus Dalglish, Scientists for Britain
- Emran Mian, Director, Social Market Foundation
- Professor Philippe Moreillon, Vice Rector, Research and International Relations, Lausanne University

### **Westminster Hall Debate**

Andrew Smith MP has tabled a debate on Student Volunteering to take place on Wednesday 2 March from 11am.

### **Estimate Day Debate**

The Commons sets aside three 'estimate days' each year on which to consider the estimates of public spending by government departments. The topic of debate on these days is chosen by the Liaison Committee, usually the subject of a recent report by a departmental select committee. Now rescheduled for Wednesday 2 March, there will be an estimate day debate on the science budget. This will take place following PMQs at 12.30pm.

## Lords Oral Questions

Lord Sharkey has tabled a question on what help the government provides to Muslim students whose religious beliefs prevent them from taking interest-charging student loans. This will take place on Thursday 3 March from 11am.

On Wednesday 7 March from 3pm, Baroness Burt of Solihull will ask a question on what assessment the government has made on the number of adults attending part-time higher or further education classes while maintaining a career.

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## Lords oral questions and debates

### Freedom of Speech

On Tuesday 22 February, Baroness Deech's question on ensuring freedom of speech was answered in the House, full transcript available [here](#).

### International Students

On Thursday 24 February Baroness Sharp of Guildford tabled a debate on removing international students from the net migration figures by including them as non-immigrant admissions. This was also Julia King's, Baroness Brown of Cambridge maiden speech to the House. The full record can be found [here](#).

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## Commons Oral Question - Universities: BME students

During women and equalities questions on Thursday 25 February Matthew Pennycook MP asked a question on BME students. Full transcript below:

**Matthew Pennycook** (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab): What steps the Government are taking to increase the number of BME young people receiving a university education . [903737]

**The Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise** (Anna Soubry ): The Prime Minister, as we have just heard in respect of apprenticeships, has set a goal of increasing by 20% the number of BME students in higher education . In our new guidelines to the director of fair access, which we published on 11 February, we ask him to maximise the contribution of access agreements towards that ambition. The share of BME enrolments at the United Kingdom 's institutions has already risen

by just over 20% to 23% between 2009 and 2015. Expenditure to widen access through agreements is expected to reach £746 million in 2016-17, up from £444 million in 2011.

**Matthew Pennycook:** Many gifted BME young people in my constituency and across the country who have lived here all their lives and are lawfully and legally resident in the UK, and who have made their way through the UK education system, are effectively prohibited from accessing the student finance support that would allow them to progress to higher education because they do not have settled immigration status. Will the Minister take steps to ensure that the Government introduce new eligibility criteria as a matter of urgency, to ensure that all our young people have the opportunity to make the most of their talents this academic year?

**Anna Soubry:** The hon. Gentleman seems to be making a very good point, which I am more than happy to discuss with the Home Office. I see that one of the relevant Ministers is already here, and we will have those conversations.

**Lucy Frazer (South East Cambridgeshire) (Con):** I welcome what the Minister has said about the figures for university applications. Does she agree that we must not take our eye off the ball when it comes to other routes, and that we must also encourage BME students to take courses such as apprenticeships and ensure that they have equal status in those routes?

**Anna Soubry:** I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend. In the city of Nottingham, I have also seen the great success of mentors and the hugely important role that they can play not only for BME youngsters but for women. Mentors do excellent work, and there is good evidence of their importance. I encourage all Members of this place to go out and make sure that in our schools, everything possible is being done to make sure that there is fairness and equality.

**Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab):** Research shows that while BME students are over-represented in university entrance figures, they tend to go to the new, post-92 universities. The Women and Equalities Committee heard this week that the Russell Group universities are poor at doing outreach to encourage students from disadvantaged and BME backgrounds to apply to their universities compared with the Ivy League universities in the US, which have a far better record on that. Will the Minister join me in seeking to address this issue?

**Anna Soubry:** The hon. Lady makes a very good point, if I may say so. I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities, who makes the point that the London Academy of Excellence is a very good example. I must say that my nearest university, the University of Nottingham is—like Nottingham Trent University and many other universities—making a really positive effort to get into all our schools to make sure that all our pupils have every opportunity and that they, if I may put it this way, aim high.

**Kate Osamor** (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op): The Government talk the talk of encouraging more black and minority ethnic students into university; yet, according to the Government's own impact assessment, their recent decision to scrap maintenance grants will disproportionately affect those very same students. Does the Minister believe that this disproportionate impact is acceptable?

**Anna Soubry:** I am not familiar with the impact assessment, but I have to say that I am quite surprised by it. I reiterate the point: it is absolutely imperative that we make it very clear that everybody should aim high. That is what we want to do and that is what we are seeking to do.

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## 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.

### **Productivity: Standards**

[Angela Eagle MP](#)

[Angela Eagle MP](#)

### **Students: Plagiarism**

[Lord Storey](#)

[Lord Storey](#)

### **Students Unions**

[Lord Stoddard of Swindon](#)

### **Manufacturing industries: Partnerships with universities**

[Jim Shannon MP](#)

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