

UCU post-Brexit policy charter

UCU calls on the government to:

1 Launch a strategic inquiry on the impact of Brexit on further and higher education

- Launch an immediate nonpartisan inquiry in consultation with university and college leaders and UCU as representative of academic and related staff.
- Agree priority Brexit outcomes to ensure further and higher education remains open to staff and students from around the world.
- Halt the Higher Education and Research Bill to allow universities to focus on dealing with the impact of Brexit and defer any new, untested and potentially damaging actions until the broader political context is clear.

2 Protect existing EU staff and students

- Guarantee the right to remain of existing EU staff and their families by granting permanent residence and waiving the five year residency requirement.
- Guarantee the right to remain of any EU student who has already been accepted onto a course of further or higher education at a UK institution prior to any agreed cut-off point, even if they have not yet commenced their studies.

3 Ensure that UK higher education remains attractive to international talent

- Retain current visa exemptions for minimum earnings in PhD level jobs, and reintroduce the post study work route for international students.
- Retain the current exemption for PhD level occupations in higher education if a change in the status of EU nationals means they become subject to Tier 2 visa regulations. This recognises that pay in the higher education sector is comparatively low for the level of qualification held, and may not meet the £35,000 earnings threshold which applies to most Tier 2 applicants.

4 Maintain and strengthen international research relationships

- Promote international collaboration and ensure continued access to EU research programmes and Erasmus+. EU research partnerships are valuable to UK universities both financially and in reputational terms.

5 Remove international students from the net migration target

- Reclassify international students and celebrate their contribution to our universities and colleges.

6 Make up any shortfall in funding arising from Brexit

- Establish the potential loss of research, social fund and fee income arising from Brexit.
- Invest government funds directly to ensure that institutions do not lose out financially. Universities and colleges benefit greatly from EU funding sources including student fees, research programmes and structural funding.

7 Protect workers' rights

- Commit to maintaining the current levels of protection given to EU workers. EU law gives workers vital protections.
- Oppose barriers to the free movement of staff and students between EU institutions.

8 Be transparent on trade policy

- Ensure that UK trade negotiations are conducted in a transparent way, with appropriate national parliamentary scrutiny to ensure the protection of our public services. The government should note concerns raised in relation to EU trade deals including CETA and TTIP.