

Briefing note on continued higher education and research collaboration through European Union programmes

UK and European institutions have a strong history of collaborating through EU higher education and research and innovation programmes. Despite the uncertainty created by the UK's decision to leave the EU, it is vital to note that at present **there is no change to UK's status in Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020**. Therefore, we would like to encourage European universities to continue to pursue collaborative research and student exchange opportunities with UK counterparts. UK universities remain strongly committed to strengthening their valuable links with European institutions and researchers. We urge European universities and researchers to continue to work with and collaborate with UK partners to ensure that these strong foundations are preserved.

Phase One Agreement and the Implications for Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+

On 8 December 2017, the UK Government and the EU negotiators published a [joint report](#) on the progress made during phase one of negotiations of the UK's exit from the EU. Marking the conclusion of the first phase of the negotiations, the report addresses citizens' rights, the Irish border, and the financial settlement. Regarding the latter, the UK and the EU have agreed that the UK will continue to pay into the EU budget until the end of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in 2020 on the same terms as a full Member State. **This means that there will be no change the UK's status in Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ until 2021 at the earliest**. The UK remains fully eligible to apply for and receive funding in all parts of Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+.

The joint report also outlines that the EU and the UK will "agree to simplified procedures so as to avoid unnecessary administrative burdens extending well beyond the end of the current MFF". This ensures that projects requiring funding beyond the end of the programmes in 2020 would continue to be appropriately managed and funded, ensuring that they can proceed as planned without disruption.

Successor programmes

The UK's relationship with the successor programmes of Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ beyond 2020 will not be clarified until those programmes have been finalised. Nonetheless, Universities UK has set out the view of our members that the UK's interest would be best served by continuing to participate in them. We are engaging closely with EU stakeholders and actively participating in the policy development process for the successor programmes for Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+. Universities UK will contribute to the public consultation for the next framework programme and the discussions on the Erasmus+ successor programme.

Citizens' rights

The joint report outlines the residency rights of EU nationals currently living in the UK and of UK nationals living in other EU countries. The cut-off for EU nationals to be covered by the withdrawal agreement is the date the UK leaves the EU (31 December 2020) meaning that anyone residing in the UK on or before this date will be covered. The UK and 27 EU Member States can require those

concerned to apply to obtain status conferring the rights of residence and be issued with a residence document. EU nationals living in the UK will be able to apply for 'settled status' if they have been a resident in the UK for five years. They can do so when the application portal opens. This is likely to be towards the end of 2018 and it will remain open for at least two years. EU nationals who have been in the UK for less than that, are entitled to remain in the UK to build up five years residency and then apply. Those with settled status will be able to leave the UK for up to five years without losing their status. The UK government is seeking to make this process as light touch as possible.

UK Government Financial Guarantees

One caveat applies to the issues agreed to in the joint report, which is that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed", referring to the fact that the second phase of exit negotiations – on the transition period and the future UK-EU relationship – has the potential to influence the UK's withdrawal agreement.

In the unlikely event of significant changes to the above agreed terms, or a no-deal scenario, the UK Government has committed to [guarantee all successful bids made by UK applicants to Horizon 2020 while the UK is still an EU Member State](#). This means that European researchers can continue to apply for Horizon 2020 funding for joint research projects with UK partners until 29 March 2019 in complete confidence that the funding will not be affected by the UK's departure. See also our [Q&A](#) for more information.

Similarly, students at UK and European universities remain eligible to participate in Erasmus+ exchanges until the point of exit. To provide further clarity for universities and students, the UK Government has confirmed that it will [guarantee grant agreements for successful Erasmus+ bids signed while the UK is still an EU Member State](#), even if they are not approved until after the UK leaves and/or payments continue beyond the point of the exit in March 2019. This means that UK universities and students studying at UK universities can prepare for participation as usual for the 2018-19 and the 2019-20 academic year.