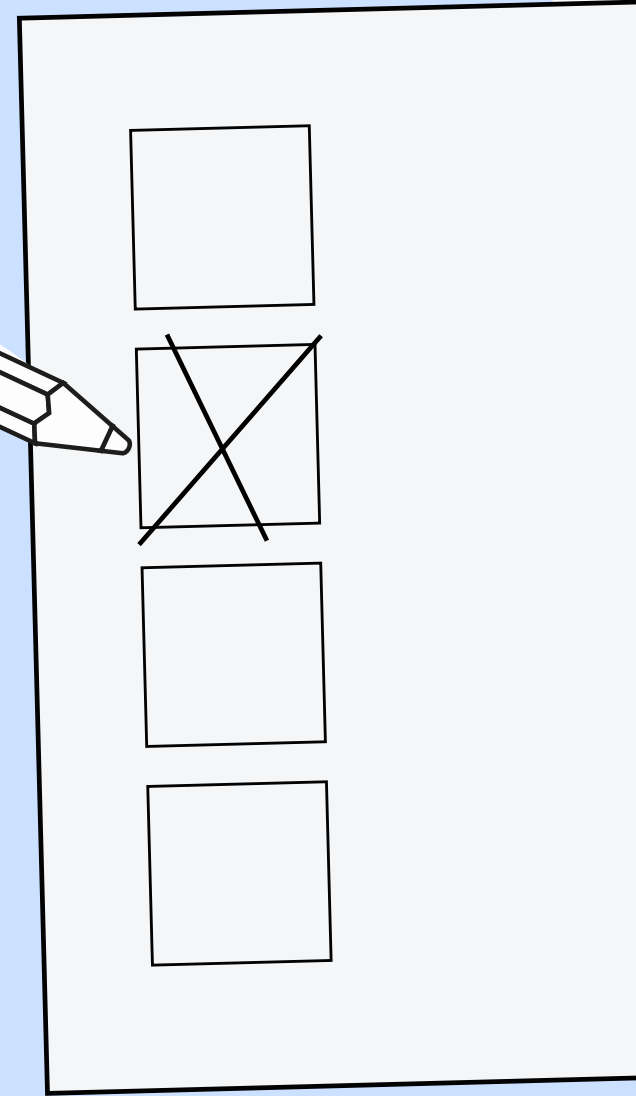
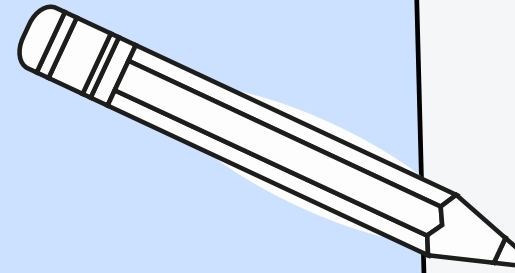


Opportunity and growth

A manifesto from Universities UK
universitiesuk.ac.uk/general-election



The UK's universities are a success story and one of the UK's greatest assets. They transform lives for the better, by:



Providing the knowledge and skills that drive growth and prosperity

Our universities educate over **2.7 million students** every year and contribute **£130 billion a year** to the economy, supporting more than **760,000 jobs** – that's **2.8% of all jobs in the UK**.



Making groundbreaking discoveries that have the power to change the world

Our universities generate world-leading research. The UK is the fourth largest producer of research in the world and in 2024, four of our universities were ranked among the top 10 leading universities in the world.



Forming partnerships that are integral to the success of local communities

Our universities are responsible for helping create **19,000 active spin-out companies**, start-ups and social enterprises, **employing 96,000 people**.

Between 2021 and 2026, UK universities will provide more than **£11.6 billion of support and services to small enterprises, businesses, and not-for-profits**.



Powering our public services by training the next generation of nurses, doctors and teachers

Our universities train over **100,000 public service workers** every year. That includes **42,000 nurses, 21,000 medical specialists, and 38,000 teachers**. They will be essential partners with the next government to grow the health workforce in the future.



What we've achieved so far is only a fraction of what universities could do

With continued strong demand for graduates and a predicted boom in the number of 18-year-olds over the coming years, universities stand ready to work with the next government to meet this demand. We want to play the strongest possible role in supporting growth, jobs, and opportunity in the next decade.

Here's what we need from the next government to do that. These measures are essential for thriving universities to serve the UK.

Our recommendations

To offer the greatest value to society, we need the next government to deliver a single, strategic approach to research, innovation and higher education so that our universities can be better in a decade than they are today.

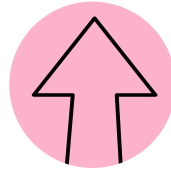


Supporting students to succeed

We want a system which is fairer to all and supports the long-term ambitions of our universities to educate the next generation. We call on political parties to commit to:



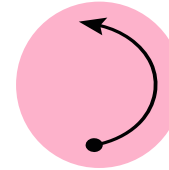
Reinstating maintenance grants for those who need them most to ensure future students have the same opportunities as those of the last decade.



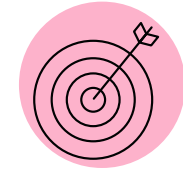
Correcting maintenance loans to reflect real rates of inflation and adjusting the household income threshold, which has been frozen since 2008.



Providing enough university places to meet increased demand resulting from demographic growth.



Returning teaching investment per student to the equivalent of 2015–16 levels in England to ensure that all those with the aspiration and ability to go to university have a high-quality education and experience. In England, this includes linking tuition fees for undergraduate students to inflation and an increase in grants for teaching to prevent the continued drop in real terms value for students.



Targeting regulation where the risks are highest and making sure it is as efficient as possible.

Putting universities at the heart of growth

We want to harness universities' capacity to drive economic growth, innovation, creativity, and productivity. We need a knowledge-intensive economy, developing high-skilled jobs across the UK. As part of this, the UK must remain internationally competitive, attracting skills and talent from across the globe to study and work here. We call on political parties to commit to:



Setting a target for GDP invested in research and development (R&D)

by 2030 which matches the most innovative and competitive economies around the world.



Treating R&D as long-term capital investment

through 10-year funding cycles to maximise the ability to secure private investment through increased certainty.



Supporting stable and managed growth in international students,

backed by a pledge to maintain the Graduate visa.

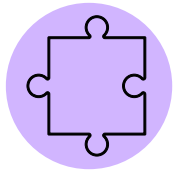


Increasing public trust and confidence in the UK's immigration system

by separating temporary migration from permanent migration in migration figures.

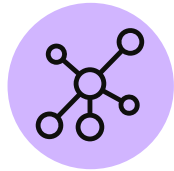
Supporting opportunity, place, and social mobility

We can do more to improve opportunity and social mobility across the UK. Universities play a vital role alongside the government to achieve this. To help us have even greater impact, we call on political parties to commit to:



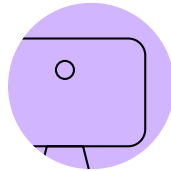
Incentivising stronger place-based networks

that promote access to tertiary education – whether that's higher education, further education, or apprenticeships.



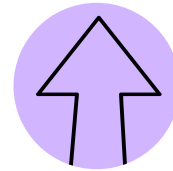
Establishing a new 'tertiary education opportunity fund'

that will harness collaboration between colleges and universities to widen participation in tertiary education.



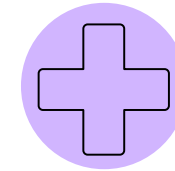
Providing enough resources and support to universities

to guarantee the future success of degree apprenticeships.



Increasing support for universities to work with businesses

through place-based innovation funding and supporting start-ups and spinouts that create local opportunities and growth.



Working with universities to deliver NHS England's Long Term Workforce Plan

by investing in a recruitment campaign, increasing placement capacity and committing to new facilities and infrastructure, including new technologies.



Encouraging more universities back into teacher training

to help address the undersupply of high-quality teachers.

About Universities UK

At Universities UK, we harness the power of the UK's universities and create the conditions for them to thrive. We are their collective voice, bringing them together to pursue a common cause: thriving universities, serving society.

For more information, contact
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February 2024

ISBN: 978-1-84036-525-2