



Universities UK

# RECOVERY, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND OPPORTUNITY

A VISION FOR UNIVERSITIES



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# A COMMITMENT FROM THE UK'S UNIVERSITIES

**Universities are committed to creating a knowledge-led economy and society in which all can flourish. We will support the country through the current crisis and play a central role in driving recovery.**

In the short term, as the challenges of the pandemic remain critical, universities are committed to doing everything they can to contribute to efforts to tackle the virus while continuing to deliver teaching for students, vital research and knowledge transfer. Universities across the UK have contributed to the national effort by providing lab space, highly skilled staff, testing equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), accommodation for healthcare workers and supporting graduates and other volunteers to join frontline healthcare services. Universities have applied our world-leading research expertise to develop potential vaccines and new treatments, utilising the strong links and partnerships with the health service and business to bring through the benefits at record speed.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed our lives and challenged us in ways that we could never have imagined – and we still cannot fully predict how severe

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## **The higher education sector will play a leading role in developing people's skills, and re-skilling the workforce**

and long term some of these impacts will be to health and well-being, the economy and communities. We are committed to supporting the nation's economic and social recovery and driving its long-term prosperity.

The higher education sector will play a leading role in developing people's skills and in re-skilling the workforce. We are committed to working in partnership across the education system to create the flexibility needed

by learners and businesses to meet their workforce needs. We will create opportunities for everyone to develop their skills, including while working, studying part time or through bitesize learning, and support those individuals and communities that have been left behind when it comes to access to education and job prospects. We will continue to work with schools, colleges and with the communities in which we are located to open opportunity and enhance life chances, getting people into university and helping them to succeed and reap the benefits.

UK universities are committed to protecting and enhancing the quality and value of what we provide for our students and will collectively address any legitimate challenges that threaten to undermine public confidence. We are also committed to innovation, to ensure that we remain relevant and competitive in a global market, learning the lessons from the shift to online provision during lockdown and embedding digital teaching and learning as a high-quality part of the UK higher education offer.

The sector is committed to consolidating and strengthening the position of the UK as a world leader in research and maximising the benefits of research to the economy, society and the everyday lives of our communities. We share the government's ambition to place the UK as a science and research superpower, attracting inward investment, making world-leading discoveries, generating knowledge and creating new and innovative businesses. Alongside our high-impact medical and scientific research, our arts, humanities and social sciences research is equally vital, particularly for the UK's increasingly important creative economy, worth an estimated £111.7 billion GVA (gross value added) (DCMS, 2018).

We will use our global reach and reputation, strong and deep international links and positive standing to help the UK to be influential on the world stage, and to attract talent and investment from around the world. This includes playing a critical role in trade, exports and support for international business and research collaboration.

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### **We share the government's ambition to place the UK as a science superpower**

We will support our communities by providing the best quality training for the next generation of healthcare workers, social workers and teachers. We will also enrich our communities through access to museums, galleries, libraries and sports facilities, and play a role within communities as places to meet, learn, build understanding, advance knowledge and debate a wide diversity of views – the core value of universities.

The higher education sector is stronger because of its diversity, containing a broad range of specialisms, missions and geographies. This enhances our ability to have a positive impact on the economy and society, people and communities, acting as a powerful force for good. The commitments set out above are shared across our diverse UK-wide higher education system. The next section of this vision sets out how we are making progress and how by working in partnership with government, we can go further.

## 1

## ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND LEVELLING UP



### The years ahead are set to be a time of unparalleled change, challenge and opportunity.

Now, more than ever, we need an education system that is accessible and enables people to study throughout their lives, so they can retrain to meet new skills needs and have more than one career in their lifetime. Many of the UK's fastest growing industries are reliant on highly skilled graduates, from artificial intelligence to green technology, from robotics to creative industries, with demand for graduate skills growing in many sectors of the economy. A 2019 CBI employer survey showed that graduate openings have continued to grow with nearly nine in 10 businesses either maintaining or increasing their graduate recruitment (CBI, 2019).

Universities are well placed to play a central role in delivering the skills needs of the new economy that emerges after Covid-19, with maximum impact coming from strengthening existing and building new partnerships with employers, colleges, local businesses and the public sector.

#### What universities are doing

Every year, universities teach over 2 million students and provide around 800,000 highly qualified and skilled graduates that go on to work across all sectors of the economy or to pursue further study and research. Almost half (42%) of this provision is vocational and technical, directly informed by employer need.

Universities are engaged in a wide range of regional collaborations with further education, including Institutes of Technology (IoTs) and targeted provision to upskill and re-skill workforces in sectors such as automotive engineering, construction and high-value manufacturing (UUK, 2018). The growth of degree apprenticeships is strengthening links between employers and higher education to meet skills needs in key sectors such as digital, healthcare and the police (UUK, 2019). Many universities are ready to scale up alternatives to the traditional three-year degree, and give more people chances to study elements of a course in a 'bitesize' learning model supported by flexible credit accumulation.

Our university-based research is world leading, with a healthy and diverse ecosystem of blue skies discovery and applied research. Universities support interdisciplinary diversity that enables responsiveness and underpins our ability to address some of the biggest challenges we face. Our research acts as a beacon for investment and drives innovation. For example, university-owned spin-outs generated £1.4 billion across the UK in 2018/19. As a sector we want to go further and ensure the knowledge

## 800,000

highly qualified and skilled graduates are provided by universities

in our universities can be translated into benefits for society and the economy. Alongside the government's Knowledge Exchange Framework, the Knowledge Exchange Concordat is encouraging institutions to redouble efforts to deliver real-world impacts (UUK, 2020b).

Alongside our research universities drive entrepreneurship and innovation in many different ways. Recent work for the Industrial Strategy Council shows the scale of universities' role across the regions of the country, from research impact and knowledge-exchange to the importance of entrepreneurial students and graduate start-ups (UUK, 2020a). Graduate start-ups across the UK turned over more than £1bn in 2018/19.

## Recommendations

**Universities and government need to work together to address the barriers to further success and drive up our skills base. The prime minister's recent commitment to greater flexibility across the post-18 system and a flexible lifelong loan entitlement up to four years is very welcome. The UK government should take the following steps to deliver on this commitment and maximise the potential for upskilling and retraining through flexible learning.**

- **Relax the eligibility criteria for financial support** for higher education to enable greater access to short courses from level 4 and level 5 up to postgraduate study, specifically removing the requirements to i) study at an intensity of 25% or greater of a full-time equivalent course; and ii) follow a full course for a specified qualification.
- **Modernise the regulatory system** to recognise the level 4 and level 5 components of an undergraduate degree, not just as non-completion of level 6.
- **Make it easier for higher and further education providers to collaborate** and deliver more flexible opportunities for upskilling and re-skilling locally by:
  - revamping the Sector Deals to support higher- and further-education partnerships and levels 4 and 5 across the board, including through integration with local Skills Advisory Panels
  - providing ongoing support to IoTs so they can grow and be sustainable
  - ensuring that reforms at levels 4 and 5 allow learners to progress to technical, apprenticeship and more academically focused provision
  - ensuring the National Skills Fund includes support for HE and FE partnerships and HE skills development (especially at level 4 and 5) where these have been identified as sector or local skills priorities
  - stripping away regulatory obstacles that can make innovation difficult and block flexibility for partners to work together.

- **Create a new fund for transformative change** in higher education, with bids covering a range of collaborative activity and addressing one or more of the following: enhance regional growth; grow economic activity; improve the quality of teaching and research; and enhance life chances for individuals.
- **Support a national graduate paid intern scheme**, getting highly-skilled graduates into companies to help those businesses to thrive.
- **Champion the role and value of degree apprenticeships**, supporting growth to meet employers' need and ensuring that systems are as streamlined as possible.
- **Set out proposals for the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)** to help universities target their efforts on addressing economic disparities in their regions, with a strong focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises and innovation and skills.

**Universities and government need to work together to address the barriers to further success, securing world-leading research and knowledge creation that has impact. To achieve this, the UK government should take the following steps:**

- **Ensure that research funders meet more of the cost of research**, and significantly grow flexible, excellence-driven and low-bureaucracy research funding for universities (known as quality-related research).
- **Grow the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF)** in England. The removal of the lower thresholds in the fund should be considered to enable small, research-active universities to drive growth and support economic recovery in their localities.
- **Develop regionally focused translational research hubs**, which would pool the diverse research strengths of a region and drive innovation in the local economy.

## 2

## EQUAL CHANCES: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND TRANSFORMING LIVES



### **Universities want to lead the way in addressing social inequalities and enhancing life chances for all.**

We want to create a future where anyone with the potential to benefit from a university education can do so, regardless of their background. Universities must also be safe and inclusive places to live, work and study, so that no student or member of staff is subject to any form of harassment, intimidation, bullying or threatening or violent behaviour.

### **What universities are doing**

In 2017-18, higher education providers in England invested £949.9 million in activities to unlock opportunity for some of the most disadvantaged. They work in partnership with further education colleges and support a wide range of relationships with schools to raise standards and drive up attainment (UUK, 2017). Universities have risen to the challenges that have resulted from the pandemic, such as addressing digital poverty, providing targeted and enhanced hardship funding where needed, and working hard to support students with disabilities, and care-experienced and estranged students.

Fair admissions is a critical part of the challenge. Through the UUK fair admissions review, we will soon announce a set of reforms that will modernise the university admissions process to put students' and applicants' needs firmly at the heart of the system (UUK, 2019a). The review is addressing concerns over offer-making practices (including the growth in unconditional offers), and how transparency can be increased and access better supported, and is developing recommendations on post-qualification admissions.

Universities have been proactive in their commitment to eliminate the degree-awarding gap between white students and students from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds. Over 100 universities have signed UUK's pledge to eliminate the gap (UUK, 2019b) and UUK continues to monitor sector-wide progress closely.

Universities are strengthening the pipeline of talent heading into research careers, delivering the commitments of the concordat to support the career development of researchers and in doing so improving employment conditions and support (Concordat Strategy Group, 2019).

# £949M

invested by HE providers in activities to unlock opportunity for some of the most disadvantaged

Universities are committed to preventing and responding to all forms of harassment and is creating an inclusive environment, including by preventing and responding to racial harassment (UUK, 2019c), and s empowering leaders to support ongoing cultural change (UUK, 2019d).

## Recommendations

**Universities and government need to work together to address the barriers to further success. The UK government should take the following steps:**

- **Continue funding for collaborative partnerships** between higher and further education providers and schools once the Office for Students (OfS) Uni Connect programme ends in 2021. This should include expanding opportunities for the most high-need schools to engage.
- **Introduce targeted maintenance grants** for those students that need them the most and remove the financial barriers for those wanting to study flexibly, such as part time and mature students.
- **Extend support for the additional costs of study** via Childcare Grants and the Parents' Learning Allowance to all students.
- **In England, make sure there is no cut in real-terms funding per university student**, to secure high quality teaching and world-class learning resources. This includes maintaining remaining government funding per student and the premium for supporting those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Commit to ensuring that there will be no imposition of student numbers caps in England.** Any government-enforced number caps would create new barriers to access and a cap on aspirations.

## 3

## A HIGH-QUALITY UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE FOR ALL STUDENTS



### UK universities have a global reputation for the quality of their teaching and learning.

They are committed to providing a high-quality student experience to all and are held to account by external government regulation and quality assurance, and through assessment mechanisms such as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). This is combined with corporate and academic governance that provides oversight within the institution and assurances on quality, effective financial management and sustainability. Universities work closely with their student bodies and Students' Unions to give students a strong role and a voice in maintaining value and quality.

Any threats to universities' reputation for quality and standards need to be tackled head on. A strength of the UK higher education sector, which sets it apart and underpins its success, is its strong autonomy. However, this must come with responsibility to collectively address legitimate challenges that threaten to undermine public confidence in the sector. Universities must also be continuously striving to innovate to remain relevant in a competitive global market.

### What universities are doing

Universities from across the UK have recently agreed action to tackle grade inflation (UUK, 2020e), reconfirming the sector's strong collective commitment to protect the value of qualifications. This work has already had some effect in moderating the percentage growth in the award of Firsts and 2:1 degrees and in increasing confidence in classifications.

It is imperative that students receive a high-quality university education. It is not in the interests of students or the sector for low-quality provision to go unchecked. Universities should be continually reflecting on, and looking to improve the quality of the offer across the courses they deliver and taking quick action to address those that are not delivering good value. Universities UK is developing a new sector charter in England that would drive progress on this and provide a way of assessing courses to make sure they are in students' interests and delivering good value.

Universities UK has undertaken two major reviews of efficiency in the last decade and the sector has since shown a strong commitment to reducing waste and getting the most out of the investment made by students and the public. Universities have met ambitious targets for collaborative procurement spend, saving hundreds of millions of pounds (UUK, 2019e).

Any threats to universities' reputation for quality and standards need to be tackled head on

Universities have demonstrated prudent management of resources as fee levels in England have been frozen and government per-student funding reduced, and have worked hard to absorb in-year reductions in income and costs associated with creating a Covid-19-safe environment.

The March 2020 lockdown saw a wholesale shift to delivering remote online teaching, learning and assessment. Universities across the UK are now preparing for a future that involves a flexible, hybrid model combining face-to-face and blended online teaching and learning that will continue to retain a high-quality student experience. The Jisc-led Teaching and Learning Re-imagined initiative is engaging sector leaders in how we can capitalise on this experience and enable further innovation and adoption of advanced technologies.

## Recommendations

**Universities and government need to work together to address the barriers to further success. The government should take the following steps:**

- › **Engage with league-table providers** to address any perverse incentives to prioritise an increase in upper-class degree awards.
- › **Work with students and universities on proposed reforms to the National Student Survey (NSS)** to ensure that student feedback continues to play a role in driving up quality and providing useful information to students, while keeping the administrative burden to a minimum.
- › **Ensure that the bureaucracy does not add costly burdens**, including:
  - not proceeding with subject-level TEF until the limitations of the methodology, its costs to universities and the taxpayer, and the actual value of its contribution to student decision-making in the wider student information landscape, have been fully considered
  - wherever possible, using data and intelligence already available through other sources (e.g. UCAS) to minimise reporting demands
  - requiring the OfS always, when it is considering expansion of the regulatory framework or new conditions, to simultaneously reduce the burden to ensure net overall requirements do not at the least increase.

## 4

## THE UK'S GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE POSITION



**The UK's higher education sector is one of the world's very best. Our internationally excellent research and innovation system are also based at our universities.**

The UK's universities are committed to being global in their outlook, influence and impact. We need an immigration system that support us to attract international students and to attract and retain highly skilled staff from around the world. Targeted investment, alongside the implementation of the government's ambitious plans for growth in higher education exports and global research collaboration, will help the UK's universities to provide a major boost to local economies, jobs, inward investment and national competitiveness.

### What universities are doing

Last year, the UK welcomed 486,000 international students – second only to the USA – while more than 660,000 students studied for UK degrees overseas on international branch campuses or through transnational education (TNE) partnerships. Together, these activities accounted for 67% of all UK education exports and international higher education has been among the UK's largest and fastest growing service export sectors.

Our research output is high quality and our excellence is broad-based across many disciplines. International collaborations contribute greatly to this excellence. Around 57% of UK research outputs are produced in collaboration with an international co-author and 50% of all research-only staff and 35% of postgraduate research students working in our universities are from outside the UK.

Universities support the government's ambitious plans to grow international student numbers to 600,000 a year by 2030, with a shared focus on growth, diversification and the quality of the international student experience.

We have developed guidelines to support universities in managing and mitigating the risk of interference in international collaborations, raising awareness and understanding of the challenges that universities face, and providing support for individuals and institutions to make informed decisions (UUK 2020d). We will continue to work with government to ensure that universities take a proactive approach to these risks.

## 486,000

**international students welcomed to the UK in 2019, second only to the USA**

Commit to building on the target...to grow education exports to

**£35bn**

by 2030

## Recommendations

**We welcome the recent government announcements to elevate the UK's universities on the global stage to ensure we can continue to attract students and the best global talent. We must build on this to deliver an ambitious agenda to grow our education exports, enhance the scale and scope of our international research collaborations and partnerships, and attract, nurture and retain global talent.**

**To significantly grow our education exports and boost the economy, the UK government should take the following steps:**

- **Commit to building on the targets set out in the International Education Strategy to grow education exports** to £35 billion by 2030 and to increase the number of international students to 600,000 over the same period.
- **Invest £12.5 million to create up to 2,500 new scholarships** targeted at EU students, co-funded by universities.
- **Support the development of new commercial finance packages** to help attract more students to the UK.
- **Enhance efforts to promote the UK higher education offer overseas** by increasing investment in Study UK to £20 million a year, improving its governance and incorporating greater sector engagement.
- **Increase Official Development Assistance (ODA) investment in activities** to support higher education system reform in and develop networks and partnerships with emerging economies.

**To enhance the scale and impact of international research collaboration, mobility and partnerships, the government should take the following steps:**

- **Prioritise full Association to the Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ programmes.**
- **Ensure that funded contingency plans are in place should Association not be possible.** Any funding to replace Horizon Europe should be additional to current research and development (R&D) spending commitments set out in the 2020 Budget, including providing guarantees for third-country participation in Horizon Europe. A national replacement mobility scheme should also be fully funded.
- **Ensure that research partnerships are central** to the government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) strategy by maintaining and building on the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Newton Fund.
- **Develop a new global prestige research fund** to attract and retain global talent to pursue new, blue-sky research ideas in the UK and to grow the range and scope of system-to-system funding agreements with other funders.

**To help attract, nurture and retain global talent, the government should take the following steps:**

- **Fully develop the proposed Office for Talent** to establish a ‘one-stop-shop’ providing immigration and resettlement advice to prospective applicants to the UK.
- **Benchmark the UK’s offer against international competitors** to identify areas where better support can be provided to global talent that is considering the UK as a study or work destination.
- **Ensure that the UK’s visa and immigration system offers a ‘best-in-class’** service to international talent in terms of cost, accessibility and ease of navigation.

## 5

## HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



## The pandemic has placed health and well-being centre stage, with universities as key actors.

It has made us all value the hugely important role our doctors, nurses and other healthcare professions play in saving lives, and foregrounded medical research, not just in the widespread anticipation of the discovery of vaccines and therapies, but also in daily discussion of the unequal impact of the virus on us as individuals and as communities, through to debate about the role of science in policymaking.

### What universities are doing

Every year, more than 50,000 new, high-quality healthcare professionals leave universities and take up roles in our NHS and care services, from doctors and nurses to the multiple professions allied to healthcare such as paramedics, radiographers and occupational therapists. Universities play a critical role in driving up the quality and safety of our healthcare services.

Universities are national and international centres of excellence in biomedicine and medical research, mobilising partnerships with industry and the third sector to enhance national health and wealth and to meet global challenges. The life sciences sector has an annual turnover of £70 billion, including £30 billion in export value. The UK has the highest per-capita share of the top 1% most frequently cited life sciences publications worldwide, second only to the US in terms of gross share. A unique feature of this system is the relationship between universities and the NHS, evidenced by the strongest clinical trials pipeline in Europe, which is driving through the development of, and access to new medicines and treatments.

Universities are also prioritising health and well-being for universities' population of students and staff, creating healthy settings and investing in services to protect and improve the health of our communities. This work is even more critical in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## £70bn

annual turnover for life sciences sector including £30bn in export value

## Recommendations

**Universities and the government need to work together to address the barriers to further success. The UK government should take the following steps:**

- › **Secure the sustained growth of healthcare programmes** to meet the government's ambitious targets through funded expansion of medical and health/social care placements and investment in teaching capacity, including support for digital innovation and simulation.
- › **Convene universities, regulators and professional bodies** to drive regulatory improvement, particularly following the UK's departure from the EU, in support of growth of and innovation in these professions.
- › **Commit support for clinical academic roles** and career pathways that provide teaching and research capacity, and instil research-informed practice that is shown by evidence to improve patient outcomes, quality and safety.
- › **Support continuing integration** of medical research and healthcare services based on existing models of academic healthcare–science partnerships to advance clinical and population health outcomes.
- › **Target support for whole-university approaches** to the mental health and well-being of students and staff to build on the lifetime well-being gain for graduates, enhancing their resilience and health literacy.
- › **Incentivise public–private partnerships** for well-being along the education journey and into the workplace.

# 6

## TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE



**In May 2019, the UK government rightly declared a climate emergency, followed by a requirement that the UK bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.**

Universities are committed to making a regional, national and global contribution to emissions reduction, climate change adaptation and providing highly skilled people to support a green recovery.

### What universities are doing

The UK higher education sector leads the way in climate research, which means the UK can play a prominent role in influencing and shaping global policy. We have mapped the full extent of this [here](#). Universities are working closely with local authorities on developing carbon commitments for their regions, and working with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) on decarbonisation strategies for businesses, and with schools and colleges to raise awareness. Universities also support a wide range of social enterprises and student start-ups that are addressing issues of sustainability.

A significant proportion of UK universities have made commitments to achieve net-zero carbon emissions in their own operations by 2050 at the latest, with many seeking to achieve this within the coming decade. The Climate Commission for Higher and Further Education, working in partnership with students, is currently exploring how institutions can go further. This includes ways to measure and reduce Scope 3 emissions, how climate awareness can be better embedded into the curriculum, and the role that universities can play to ensure that all aspects of society adapt effectively to the changing climate. We are committed to working with students and our communities to go further. In a new briefing paper published on 15 October 2020, the Aldersgate Group, which represents many of the UK's largest businesses, shows that more than nine in ten UK businesses believe they are facing a low-carbon skills deficit, with the problem most pronounced in Yorkshire and the Humber, the West Midlands and the North East (Aldersgate Group, 2020). Universities are well placed to address this challenge, working with businesses and local actors.

## Recommendations

**Universities and the government need to work together to address the barriers to further success. The UK government should take the following steps:**

- **Ensure that universities have a prominent role** and a voice in the coming COP26 negotiations, drawing on their academic expertise and research evidence.
- **Unlock the role of universities to support green recovery** by embedding this into funding and regulatory incentives, including:
  - recognising the costs associated with building or adapting infrastructure through government capital investment funding
  - through the National Skills Fund and Shared Prosperity Fund, creating mechanisms for universities to work with business, particularly SMEs, to develop workforce capability and support low-carbon business transformation
  - supporting a national recovery intern scheme, as proposed above, which includes provision for getting graduates into businesses to support decarbonisation and green recovery
  - ensuring appropriate and proportionate requirements for any monitoring of progress towards reducing the sector's emissions that have utility and value rather than adding to the regulatory burden.

## 7

## CULTURE AND COMMUNITY



**Universities play a strong role in contributing to the UK's identity, values and local cultural life by providing and engaging in creative, artistic and sports activities across communities.**

The creative and performing arts at UK universities are among the best in the world and fuel the UK's vibrant, diverse and successful creative industries, which is one of the fastest growing sectors of the UK's economy. Universities are places of debate, playing an important democratic role and providing an environment where ideas and differing views are developed and challenged, and protecting and promoting free speech. They also play a role in encouraging tolerance and community cohesion.

### What universities are doing

Universities support their local communities in all sorts of ways. They provide high-quality sports and arts facilities (often to a professional standard), shape local policy and strategy, provide civic leadership and act as vocal, high-profile advocates for their town, city or region across the globe. Universities are major employers, with 439,955 staff across the UK. They also generate jobs indirectly through their spending on local goods and services: for every 100 jobs at a university, another 117 are created in the wider economy. Each year, more than 725,000 students volunteer while at university, providing vital support to local communities, charities and local services. Sixty-six universities comprising the Civic University Network have developed a civic university agreement in partnership with local government and other major institutions in their area, with the aim of enhancing the impact universities have in their region and localities.

There are over 100 university museums across the country that hold collections of significant historical and cultural importance and that preserve our country's strong national and regional heritage. These are open to the public, attracting millions of visitors annually.

Universities hold thousands of free public lectures and similar events each year. They are unequivocally committed to the values of free speech and freedom of expression within the law, a deeply held value of higher education. Universities recently worked closely with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on new guidance to ensure that freedom of speech and expression can be upheld (EHRC, 2019).

Universities are working with schools and colleges, businesses and the public sector to deliver a national languages strategy so that the UK can become a linguistic powerhouse (UUK, 2020c).

## 439,955

**staff across the UK, making universities a major employer**

## Recommendations

**Universities and the government need to work together to address the barriers to further success. The UK government should take the following steps:**

- › **Work with the university sector and student unions** to promote, embed and evaluate the impact the EHRC guidance has had on freedom of speech and freedom of expression and develop the evidence to support further and proportionate action, should that be needed.
- › **Work with education, businesses and the public sector** to get behind the delivery of the national languages strategy so the UK can become a linguistic powerhouse.
- › **Support our creative economy** by reviewing R&D definitions to ensure that these are not narrower than those of competitors, and do not neglect R&D in the UK's internationally strong creative industries, which have been hit hard by Covid-19 measures.

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## Websites

Civic University Network available at: [www.civicuniversitynetwork.co.uk/civic-universities/](http://www.civicuniversitynetwork.co.uk/civic-universities/)

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Jisc Learning and Teaching Reimagined available at: [www.jisc.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-reimagined](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/learning-and-teaching-reimagined)

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**Universities UK**

Woburn House  
20 Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9HQ

 +44 (0)20 7419 4111

 [info@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:info@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

 [universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://universitiesuk.ac.uk)

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