

Academy and Campaign Statement on the Queen's Speech

21 June 2017

In light of the Queen's Speech today, the Academy of Social Sciences and its Campaign for Social Science stress the importance of the UK higher education and research sector to the country, and the role that the social sciences will need to play in Brexit, the Industrial Strategy, policies in education and social care and health, and other challenges facing the United Kingdom in the years ahead. The social sciences are ready to do their part.

The Queen's Speech reiterated the Government's priority of securing 'the best possible deal' for the UK as it leaves the EU. Any such deal, however, must recognise the importance of the UK science, research and higher education sector to the UK's future prosperity and well-being. [UK universities provide the country with economic benefits at the local, regional and national levels](#), providing a significant source of growth for local communities and in regional development. Some of that is buoyed by international academic staff and international students. Yet, as [we have previously outlined](#), Brexit has the potential to deeply impact international research collaborations, our access to EU research funding, and the ease of movement of staff and students – all of which play an integral role in the health and vitality of our sector.

The 'best possible deal' for the UK would mitigate these risks, and we continue to believe that the Government should take the following steps:

- **Promote and encourage cross-national collaborations as the details of Brexit are negotiated; ideally the Government would negotiate full UK participation in the upcoming 9th Framework Programme as an associated country**
- **Ensure that policy on international students bears in mind their financial contributions to UK universities and the extent to which they can, with appropriate development of post-study visas, be a source of skills and knowledge both for universities and the wider economy**
- **Ensure that policies and processes for recruiting EU and international staff are made straightforward and flexible for universities, and not restricted only to high-visibility sectors like finance or computing**

Moreover, if the government is to fulfil its commitment to building the 'widest possible' cross-sector consensus on the country's future outside the EU, broader engagement with the higher education, research, and (social) science communities is needed. We continue to believe **it is essential that a member of the UK negotiating team is knowledgeable about higher education and research**. We also strongly believe that the **High Level Stakeholder Working Group on EU Exit, Universities, Research and Innovation** would

be strengthened by the inclusion of a representative from the social science community.

Social science expertise will play a critical role not only in the Brexit negotiation process, but also in addressing future grand challenges and evaluating the industrial strategy. A successful strategy for growth and development rests not only on economic expertise, but also in understanding law and planning, incentives for long-term as opposed to short-term growth, and what works in effecting a step-change in UK education and skills. Higher levels of investment in science and technology alone will not lead to growth, if policies for regional development, planning, investment and skills do not promote effective implementation and enterprise.

Social science will also be vital in taking on wider social and global challenges. Using our understanding to influence human behaviour is essential if issues such as reforming mental healthcare, improving education and skills for the future, and tackling climate change are to be addressed. Yet the social sciences can only play a constructive role if their voice is heard and their work supported. The Academy and the Campaign thus call again for ***engagement with us in the development of the industrial strategy and planning for regional development and skills.***