



**House of Commons Education Select Committee “*The impact of exiting the European Union on higher education*” inquiry
GuildHE’s Written Response to the Call for Evidence**

11 November 2016

GuildHE

1. [GuildHE](#) is an officially recognised representative body for UK Higher Education. Our members include universities, university colleges, further education colleges and specialist institutions from both the traditional and private (“for profit” and “not for profit”) sectors. Member institutions include some major providers in professional subject areas including art, design and media, music and the performing arts; agriculture and food; education; maritime; health and sports.

Opening comment

2. GuildHE welcomes assurances that Government has already made to students and universities around fees and funding.
3. However, as the UK negotiates its exit from the EU there are several areas that need to be considered:
 - Ensuring reciprocal fair and affordable study arrangements for UK and EU students
 - Ensuring favourable freedom of movement terms for UK and EU staff
 - Ensuring a wide range of options that funds research excellence wherever it is found.
4. GuildHE broadly agrees with the submissions made by Universities UK. Our main additional point is that the interests of small and specialist higher education institutions are not forgotten during the negotiation process, not least because affects may be more acutely felt and ultimately impact the diversity of the sector and wider economy.
5. The below offers evidence collated from members on the possible implications following Brexit.

Potential impact on EU students studying in the UK

6. EU students add a richness to all universities and in particular to small and specialist art and design institutions.
7. EU students often form 10% or more of such institutions’ student population.
8. The release in October of early deadline data from UCAS shows a decline in applications for 2017 from the EU. Notwithstanding the very helpful Government confirmation on their fee status, this

gives an indication as to the difficulties likely from 2018 onwards and suggests the urgent need to have support and clarity on fees for EU nationals in 2018 as soon as possible.

9. Education is about challenging people's perceptions and enabling them to truly understand what it is they think and why. It is by taking students out of their comfort zones through mixing with students and staff from a range of backgrounds that will result in real learning. Higher education provides an excellent opportunity for this with its mix of staff and students from different backgrounds, whether social-economic, cultural or from other parts of the world.
10. There is a risk that should EU students be classed as international students following the UK's departure from the EU (as seems likely at present), then there is a risk of a further reduction in numbers, depending on decisions about visa policy. This would result in less diverse campuses, resulting in both a reduction in the educational experiences and potentially contributing to a less tolerant society.
11. We perceive that there will be a longer term impact to many UK industries but in particular on the UK agricultural and creative industries both in terms of losing EU and overseas students from our institutions but also from the subsequent knock-on effect on the UK work-force.
12. Given the current growth and strength of this sector within the UK economy, the potential economic implications of such a knock-on effect suggest a profoundly worrying downturn for UK plc.

Freedom of movement and potential impact on staff

13. UK universities have a reputation for openness and collaboration which has helped them to build networks and attract talented staff, students and researchers.
14. Strong international networks are important not only in achieving greater global research impact but also in facilitating the best research to take place in the UK.
15. Freedom of movement throughout Europe has been fundamental to the development, diversifying and maturing of the UK HE sector.
16. Staff and students from other European countries have brought specialised areas of research and alternative viewpoints which have complemented and enriched research and teaching in the UK.
17. In addition, mobility is key for the development of UK graduates in the global environment.
18. Many of our members rely on staff from outside the UK – at least 10% in most cases - and many of these are EU nationals. The obvious risk to us losing this talent needs urgent consideration with similar reassurances about job security for this group.
19. Given the smaller size of our institutions, changes to free movement may cause a greater impact where the proportion of EU staff and students is high.
20. Many of our institutions have a high percentage of early career researchers within their research departments, for whom developing effective research networks is essential.
21. Increased bureaucracy around movement could more severely impact such researchers especially given the fact that many will be starting their research career later in working life and that there is therefore an increased need to establish research networks quickly.

22. Achieving favourable freedom of movement terms therefore provides researchers with the opportunity to build and expand upon relationships not only with EU colleagues but also world colleagues (for example, from Commonwealth countries) in order to carry out the best research possible.

Encouraging Diversity

23. Whilst we welcome the Government's commitment to honour EU-funded projects awarded before the point of exit from the EU until the end of their lifecycle, the uncertainty over future funding will mean less of such work and hence reduce our international impact.
24. Any perception that the UK is pulling up the drawbridge will send potential partners and collaborators towards other more welcoming countries, many of which are eager to invest and build the reputations of their universities as well as to exert soft power.
25. Maintaining and encouraging the diversity of the UK's research and innovation community during negotiations is also crucial. As other witnesses to other Select Committees have pointed out, the definition of science must include humanities and social research. In particular, arts and design specialist institutions and the providers of research and teaching in the broader creative industries must not be forgotten.
26. We add that small and specialist institutions particularly have benefited from being part of EU driven collaborations as they assist in developing partnerships with other UK institutions as well as institutions elsewhere in Europe. They also have a higher bid success rate and EU funds have assisted in capacity building for such institutions. There is therefore a continued need to continue to fund and support cross-border collaborative projects.
27. The availability of EU funding has meant that a much wider range of projects have been funded than are funded solely by UK sources.
28. This diversity has been particularly helpful in ensuring that research has been undertaken in conjunction with business, industry and SMEs. The UK currently ranks second behind Germany for industry funding and UK SMEs have drawn down more funding than any other Member State. Furthermore, of the funding to UK industry, 70% goes to SMEs compared to an EU average of 50%.
29. For some of our members, as much as 68% of research funding since 2006 has been from EU sources. On the other hand, some members receive no EU funding.
30. In particular, clarification is needed over whether the UK will be able to continue taking part in Horizon 2020 should the point of exit occur before 2020.

EU Structural Funds

31. Many of our members are embedded in their local communities and make valuable contributions to the economy through effective business partnerships through high quality applied research.
32. Several have benefitted from EU Structural Funds, further enhancing their contribution to the economy and wider society.

33. Often, support for the creative industries forms a major part of these bids – examples can be found in Cornwall in particular.
34. Therefore decreased access for businesses to EU networks and funds will also impact the research environment and speed of innovation (for example, by destabilising established partnerships).
35. However, there is the opportunity for schemes such as the Global Challenges Research Fund and the emerging Industrial Strategy to be used strategically to enable continued collaboration and we welcome Greg Clark's recent comments that universities are crucial for the success of the Industrial Strategy.

Digital Single Market (DSM)

36. The DSM is a key concern for our members who have digital and media specialisms. During the two-year negotiation period the potential impacts on science, research, Digital Media, and the DSM should be at the forefront of the UK's negotiation with the EU.
37. "Geo-blocking" (a form of territorial segmentation) that according to the EC represents an obstacle to a single digital market. Negotiations should aim to prevent geo-blocking.
38. Related evidence on the DSM has already been presented to Parliament in April 2016, and is worth the Education Committee referring to. See <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/eu-internal-market-subcommittee/inquiries/parliament-2015/online-platforms/>
39. About 7 million people in Europe earn their livelihoods from core creative industries such as film, music, and television. There has been little empirical analysis to date to forecast how large an economic impact (e.g. lost jobs and wages) copyright changes may have on this group.

Government's priorities with regard to students and staff at higher education institutions

40. We emphasise that Government should provide assurances that all existing EU staff will be able to remain in the UK following the UK's exit from the EU.
41. We add that the availability of EU funding has enabled a greater scope and scale of research projects to be supported. Following the exit from the EU there will be a greater need to fund and support such cross-border collaborative projects.
42. The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is separate from the EU and as such our membership of the EHEA should be re-emphasised. We agree with the QAA's statement, particularly that: "mutual recognition of standards also helps facilitate university-level partnerships across Europe and ensures that UK graduates are globally employable."

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GuildHE
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