

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

EU Exit Institutional Position Paper

1. Context

1.1 Background

The University has achieved international recognition for its research and innovation, and continually works to develop and enhance its strong international links and global collaborations. The European Union (EU) is a very important partner for Queen's in this regard, whether through staff and students from elsewhere in the EU coming to study and work here, NI students working or studying in Europe, or University researchers working with colleagues across the EU to tackle major social and scientific challenges. In this context, the University has a tradition of successful partnerships and engagement with European partners and annually secures significant grant funding for research and other initiatives.

The UK's vote on 23 June 2016 to leave the EU will have direct and significant implications for higher education (HE). Since 2011, the University has attracted £56,483,214 of EU research funding and currently has 1,010 EU students enrolled and 764 EU staff members. While the UK is deemed a net contributor to the EU, Northern Ireland (NI) is a net beneficiary, and any immediate financial impact is likely to be negative. Dependent on the terms of the exit, NI stands to lose €862 million in structural funds, €2.5 billion in Common Agriculture Policy funding (2014-2020), and suffer a loss of access to competitive EU funding which, in the period from 2011-12 to 2013-14, amounted to £72.7 million¹.

1.2 The University's Impact on the Northern Ireland Economy

The University contributes over £1 billion to the local economy and supports over 9,250 full-time jobs. The recently published 2016 Knowledge Economy Report highlights the importance of developing a Knowledge Economy in NI, and provides the following definition:

“Knowledge economies are powered by individuals, companies and sectors that create and commercialise new ideas, technologies, processes and products to export around the world. To maintain their competitive advantage, these companies constantly strive to remain at the forefront of their industry by recruiting highly skilled individuals, investing in R&D, encouraging creativity and seeking out new markets.”

Queen's is at the forefront of cultivating the concepts and attributes referenced above. We nurture new enterprise – our spin-out companies, such as Kainos, Andor Technology and PathXL (purchased last year by the Dutch medical company, Philips), provide high value added employment opportunities for our graduates. Through QUBIS, our commercial arm, we have created over 70 spin-out companies to date, resulting in 2,000 hi-tech private sector jobs. This year saw the establishment of four new start-ups – Liopa, Sirona, ReVana and Cognition Video.

¹ Agenda NI Brexit Report: Issue 79, November 2016, p27

In the latest Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey, Queen's was placed No. 1 in the UK for intellectual property (IP) commercialisation, with a total of £34.5 million generated from IP and equity – this places us ahead of Oxford, Cambridge, the Institute of Cancer Research and Imperial College London in commercial impact. The University is also No. 1 for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) and currently has 40 active KTP projects, at a time when the number of KTPs across the UK has declined by some 10%.

Within six months of graduating, 93.5% of Queen's students are in employment or further study. Our graduates also occupy senior positions in 80 of NI's top 100 companies and hold nine of the Ministerial portfolios in the current NI Executive. This reinforces the importance of skills and education in the creation of a successful and sustainable knowledge economy.

1.3 Institutional EU-related Key Facts

- Queen's has a strong record of success in securing EU research funds; 2011-12 to date £56 million has been drawn down.
- 479 EU academics and researchers.
- 285 EU Professional Support staff.
- 1,010 EU students are enrolled at Queen's for the 2016-17 academic year.

Since 2012, 1,085 of our students have gone to Europe to study and/or on work exchange programmes.

Following the EU referendum result, there has been some welcome progress including UK Government announcements on financial support for EU students coming to the UK to study in 2017-18, transitional guarantees for the unique multilateral, multi-country funding programme, Horizon 2020 (H2020), and some short-term commitment to European Structural and Investment Funding. However, further clarification on these issues is required.

2. Queen's University Belfast Priorities

2.1 There are four key issues that must be satisfactorily addressed in the exit negotiations to support the University in contributing to the NI economy:

- Access to EU Research Funding
- Status of Current and Future EU Staff
- Student Recruitment and Mobility
- Relationship with the Republic of Ireland (ROI)

The paper examines each of these issues in detail and identifies a number of actions that require to be implemented by Government. Further detail is provided in Appendix 1.

2.2 Access to EU Research Funding

Research and innovation are global pursuits and are most effective when ideas and people are mobile across borders. The free movement of talent, the collaborations and networks, a critical mass of research activity, and funding secured through membership of the EU, contributes to the UK and NI's international standing in research. As the national science budget is becoming progressively more constrained, EU funding is

increasingly critical for the funding of innovative, collaborative and interdisciplinary research.

International research collaboration is imperative for Queen's, as a research intensive university with global ambition, and continued access to H2020 is central to maintaining and enhancing such collaborations. Research grants and contracts from the EU Government, and EC Framework Programmes, in particular, represent a substantial and increasing part of the research portfolio at Queen's. Collaborative working allows researchers to complement their knowledge and skills, access specialised equipment and facilities, and gain access to data and materials, all of which are essential to delivering solutions and impact both locally and globally.

The University welcomes the recent UK Government commitment to underwrite EU collaborative projects signed before the UK's exit from the EU. However, this commitment requires an extension to provide assurances that funding used to underwrite H2020 awards is an additional financial commitment and will not come from existing funding allocations.

A priority for Queen's is continued access to EU funding and collaborative activities under H2020 and future Framework Programmes, and that the model for longer-term engagement ensures that the University can continue to play a leading role in international research and innovation collaborations, with no reduction in the overall levels of funding. This is pivotal to maintaining and enhancing UK and NI research and innovation.

Queen's research is world-leading and, as a result, we have been particularly successful in securing EU funding. Since 2011-12, Queen's has secured £56 million in EU funding.²

Table 1: EU Funding 2011-12 to 2016-17 (to December 2016)

Year	Funding (£)	% Overall of University Research Funding
2011-12	9,565,137	19.1
2012-13	9,548,172	13.4
2013-14	9,497,582	13.4
2014-15	6,779,411	8.6
2015-16	17,057,754	17.4
2016-17 (to date)	4,035,158	18.2
Total	56,483,214	14.5

The NI Executive has set a target of obtaining £145 million from the current H2020 initiative. To date, Queen's has secured £14.5 million (€18.65 million) of H2020 funding which represents a very significant proportion (~45%) of the overall H2020 funding secured by NI organisations. This has facilitated collaborations with over 330 organisations across 39 countries, and involves some additional partnerships that are in the early stages of development. Working within the EU gives us access to specialist research infrastructures, not otherwise available in the UK. Continued access to these world-class infrastructures is essential.

An excellent example of EU partnership working is the recently announced Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) on Food. Queen's is a key partner in this substantial new pan-European partnership which brings together a unique group of 50 leading companies, universities, and scientific partners covering the entire food value

² EU Framework Programmes, H2020 and other EU Government Funds

chain. The partnership will boost innovation, growth and job creation and put Europe at the centre of a global revolution in food. The project will bring huge economic benefit to the whole agri-food industry within Northern Ireland, which already generates more than £5.5 billion in sales each year and is NI's biggest employer by far, with some 80,000 people working in the industry. The award is well aligned with the significant investment from Invest NI (£5m) and industry partners (£1.7m) in the Northern Ireland Agri-Food Quest Competence Centre (AFQCC) which is hosted at Queen's, in partnership with Ulster University and the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI).

These partnerships facilitated through Framework Funding also contribute to a number of key outcomes contained in the draft Programme for Government (PfG):

- Outcome 1 refers to "...a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy" citing innovation, research and development and skills as key drivers and pledging to "create an environment to promote and enable innovation". By attracting significant levels of European funding, the University makes a considerable contribution to this Outcome.
- Outcome 5 refers to "...an innovative and creative society...". There is no doubt that activities such as those highlighted above significantly enhance NI's international reputation for innovation and creativity. Any restriction or reduction in access to EU programmes would, therefore, represent a significant risk to the excellence of our research and thereby the ability to meet the important objectives set out in the draft PfG, if the benefits are not fully compensated elsewhere.
- Over and above access to research funding, engagement in H2020 and future Framework Programmes is a significant element of the international collaboration landscape, facilitating the establishment of networks and collaborations, and mobility of research talent, etc. Financial support for research is an essential component of attracting the best research talent to the UK and NI. There is a significant risk that without continued access to H2020 funding world-leading researchers will leave or not come to the UK and NI. This clearly has implications for Outcomes 5, 6, 10 and 12, and the associated indicators for success, as outlined in the draft Programme for Government 2016-2021 document.

In addition to Framework Funding, the University is in receipt of research grant funding from EU Member States government departments, most notably Ireland (e.g. TEAGASC (ROI), Safefood (ROI/NI Joint), Health Research Board (ROI), etc. The assumption is that access to this funding will continue post-Brexit.

EU Funding also underpins research grants received by the University via 'secondary' mechanism routes. For example, Invest NI Grants for Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I), which form part of the Investment for Growth in Jobs Fund (2014-2020), are underpinned, in part, by European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) allocated to Invest NI (~€189m). These grants have funded collaborative research partnerships between academia and industry including Almac Discovery Ltd. and Devenish Nutrition Ltd. The convention, in such cases, has been to classify grants based on their primary funding source – the source of funding used will have been a UK Government Department (to reflect the grant being awarded by Invest NI), with no reference to the EU. Therefore, the University will have received additional funding originating from the EU that is not identified as coming from the EU in our records.

It is essential that the Government addresses the following:

- Ensure continued full access to, and influence over, the current Framework Programme (Horizon 2020) and ensure that there is no restriction or reduction in access to other EU Research and Innovation Programmes and infrastructures.
- Ensure continued full access to, and influence over, all future Framework Programmes and ensure that there is no restriction or reduction in access to other EU Research and Innovation Programmes and infrastructures.

2.3 Status of Current and Future EU Staff (excluding the UK)

The market for international academic talent is globally competitive, and the contribution made by EU staff to the University's research and innovation is integral to our world-leading position. Our research eco-system is dependent on EU staff; 29% of our research staff and 30% of our academic staff are from the EU (excluding the UK). These world-class staff make an invaluable contribution to the University and NI society.

Table 2: EU Staff (excluding the UK) Employed by Queen's University Belfast 2016

Staff Category	Number of EU Staff (Excluding UK)	Total Staff	% of Total University Staff
Academic	319	1073	30%
Research	160	560	29%
Professional Support	285	2040	14%
Total	764	3673	21%

An inability to recruit the most talented academics and researchers from across the EU and the rest of the world will have significant consequences for training future graduates in key subjects, and the Executive's ambition to boost productivity and economic growth. This will also impact on the targets contained in the draft PfG, in particular, Outcome 5 which seeks to have an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential.

The University has a global reputation for expertise in a diverse range of disciplines, including Food Security, Health and Life Sciences, Cyber Security, and Peace and Justice. This reputation acts as a magnet for global talent to NI, and we are incredibly proud of our international students and colleagues. To retain this global international reputation and standing, we must remain open and welcoming to research talent, underpinned by continued ease of movement of leading international academics; all possible actions to protect the status of staff should be a key pillar of the forthcoming Brexit negotiations.

In the first instance, there is a requirement to provide assurance that all existing EU staff and their dependants will be able to continue with existing employment rights guaranteed in the UK following its exit from the EU and not suffer any detriment thereafter. During this time of uncertainty, it is imperative that we continue to send out clear messages that the University is "open for business" and remains a committed and valued international partner that offers world-class facilities and opportunities for academics and students alike.

It is vital that the long-term position of EU nationals be clarified as soon as possible to provide reassurance and prevent “brain-drain”. We strongly suggest the retention of the current rights for all current and future EU nationals at the University.

It is essential that the Government addresses the following:

- Confirmation of the continued employment and free movement rights for current and future EU staff and their dependants in the UK following its exit from the EU with no detriment suffered thereafter.
- More generally, decisions regarding immigration should reflect regional needs and more clearly recognise the benefits of EU and international academic staff.

2.4 Student Recruitment and Mobility

2.4.1 Student Recruitment

The pursuit of academic talent is a global endeavour. The University attracts world-leading students who make a significant contribution to NI society. Any impediments to these individuals gaining access to the University will have serious consequences for our local economy, in addition to inhibiting the realisation of Outcome 5 of the draft PfG, which seeks to have an innovative, creative society where people can fulfil their potential. There are also implications for Outcomes 10 and 12 of the draft PfG.

Table 3 details EU student enrolments to the University since 2012-13 and shows that 1,010 EU students are enrolled in 2016-17 to date. Confirmation of the immigration status of existing and prospective EU students and their right to remain in the UK for work or further study post-Brexit is essential to support the continued increase in student enrolment numbers.

The table illustrates the increasing reliance on EU students, who comprise 14% of the total postgraduate research (PGR) population at the University. The 2016 Knowledge Economy Report emphasises the critical requirement for an increase in PGR numbers. The report highlights that this is an area in which NI “could do better”, adding that “PhD students fuel the knowledge economy.”

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Innovative Training Networks (ITN) Programme within H2020 is a key mechanism through which Queen’s has and continues to deliver high quality doctoral-level training inside and outside academia, and across different sectors, to the next generation of researchers. The funding facilitates the bringing together of universities, research institutes and companies from different countries and with complementary competences to tackle key scientific challenges. Through its H2020 ITN awards Queen’s has recruited 22 Early Stage Researchers.

Table 3: EU Student Enrolments 2012-13 to 2016-17

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
UG	317	394	433	493	506
PGT	406	415	307	326	287
PGR	150	168	246	251	217
Total	873	977	986	1,070	1,010

As of December 2016, in addition to 1,010 EU domiciled students, we have 1,931 international students. These talented individuals come to Queen's because of our reputation for excellence, but they also make a significant contribution to our society, whether through encouraging friends and relations to visit the region, or by developing medical interventions that save the lives of our people. Their contribution to the draft PfG's Outcomes 10 and 12 is considerable, and it is vital that their talents are acknowledged, and they are encouraged to remain in NI. Additionally, transatlantic air traffic regulations are negotiated at EU level meaning an EU exit could be detrimental to NI's connectivity. This is very relevant at present as the University is lobbying to support the establishment of more direct air routes into local airports from target markets, to attract the best talent.

As the process of exiting the EU progresses, we advocate for reform of the current immigration system to more clearly recognise the benefits of international students. Future arrangements must enable Queen's to continue to attract and retain the best from across the world. The University's position is that EU and international students should be exempt from immigration restrictions or quotas and have access to the rights and privileges currently provided within EU membership.

EU undergraduate applications for 2017-18 entry, at the 15 October UCAS deadline, were 203 compared to 221 in the same period in the prior year, a reduction of -8.1%. Further detail on Medicine and Dentistry applications is set out in Table 4.

Table 4: EU UG Applications at 15 October UCAS Deadline 2016 compared to Prior Year

EU UG Applications	2015	2016	Variance (%)
Medicine	129	131	+1.5
Dentistry	22	15	-31.8
All EU	221	203	-8.1

In addition, this trend has continued with EU undergraduate applications to all courses down 6.3%, as of 6 January 2017 compared to the prior year.

We welcome the announcement that EU nationals or their family members, currently in HE, and who are assessed as eligible to receive loans and grants from Student Finance NI, will continue to receive these until the end of their period of study, including those who commenced study in August 2016. Also, the UK Government has confirmed the necessary guarantees that universities will continue to be allowed to charge EU students commencing a course in 2016-17 and 2017-18 the same tuition fees as Home students for the duration of their period of study without risk of legal challenge.

Regarding the draft PfG, Outcomes 5, 6, 10 and 12 are all directly impacted by student tuition fees and access to Loans for EU Students, and it is essential that there is clarity on these matters to mitigate some of the negative impacts of the UK's exit from the EU, and to continue to recruit talented students from the EU.

2.4.2 Student Mobility

The NI Strategy for Higher Education – Graduating to Success (2015) – commits to establishing, by 2020, a significant increase in inward and outward

international mobility, moving towards a doubling of activity compared with the 2010 baseline. The Strategy commits to ensuring that every learner can undertake an international mobility programme, whether through government-funded programmes or those provided by individual institutions.

The University's Education Strategy 2016-2021 outlines Queen's commitment to increase the number of international students choosing to study here, and to prepare all our students for the globally-connected world and workplace. In particular, we aim to increase the number of students participating in international opportunities by 10% annually. One of the main strands of student mobility is the Erasmus programme which annually supports over 14,000 UK students to study abroad. The Erasmus exchange scheme allows our students to study at leading European universities or undertake a European internship, enhancing their skills and employability. In 2015-16, the University attracted £1,024,496 in funding from the Erasmus programme, one of the highest (8th) within the UK.

Table 5: Students Engaged in Erasmus Programmes and Associated Income

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
No. Students	227	241	294	323	360	1,445
Income (£)	760,952	665,305	496,242	1,024,496	1,141,852 ³	4,088,847

Since 2012, 1,445 Queen's students have availed of the opportunity to travel throughout Europe to study or gain work-related experience; this has secured an estimated £4.08 million of funding.

In the longer term, study abroad has a positive impact on graduate employability and earning potential, as employers increasingly recognise the benefits of international experience, such as the ability to communicate and collaborate with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Students who have studied abroad are more likely to be employed and more likely to be recruited to senior roles. The Erasmus Impact Study⁴ reveals that:

- 64% of employers consider an international experience important for recruitment (up from 37% in 2006), with such hires given more responsibility earlier.
- More than one in three Erasmus trainees were offered a position at their host company.

The average starting salary for those working in the UK was higher for those who had spent time abroad compared to those who had not. This has a direct correlation to the draft PfG, in particular, Outcomes 5, 6, 10 and 12.

³ Estimated based on 2015-16 figures

⁴ Erasmus Impact Study: Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalisation of higher education institutions, European Commission (2014)
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2014/erasmus-impact_en.pdf

It is essential that the Government address the following:

- Retention of the current status regarding tuition fees, access to loans, grants and other support for EU students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) considering studying in the UK.
- Retain existing rights as regards the immigration status of existing and prospective EU students and their right to remain in the UK for work or further study post-Brexit.
- If the status quo is not protected, provide clarification on the tuition fee rate, and ability to access student loans, grants or other support, for EU students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) considering studying in the UK in the transition period before Brexit, particularly those starting in 2018-19.
- Advocate for an evidence-based reform of the current immigration system that more clearly recognises the benefits of international students and, more generally, ensure that decisions regarding immigration reflect regional needs.
- Implement a comprehensive communications strategy to promote the message that the UK remains open and welcoming to international students, in recognition of the important contributions these students make to our society, economy and our universities.
- Ensure that future EU academic and student mobility is not impeded by unnecessary bureaucracy, regardless of the immigration status of EU nationals, and that continued participation in Erasmus is secured
- Retention of the current mobility programmes such as Erasmus, and full access for participation in all future mobility programmes.

2.5 Relationship with the Republic of Ireland

NI is unique in that it is the only part of the UK which has a land border with an EU Member State. It is essential that the border issue remains uncontentious and does not become an obstacle in meeting and exceeding the University's ambitions. It is vital that Queen's staff and students (EU and preferably international) should be able to travel across the land border unimpeded, as there are staff and students who regularly cross the border to study and work at the University. Other options suggested include strengthening the crossing points between the island of Ireland and Britain. It is imperative that the EU exit does not impact the University's connections with Britain or is not seen as an obstacle to individuals wishing to travel to NI.

NI and the ROI have a shared objective to maximise participation of Ireland's researchers in H2020. To date, North-South collaborative activity has been supported through 16 H2020 awards involving 27 unique collaborations, with many more having been facilitated through previous Framework Programmes.

In 2013, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), now the Department for the Economy (DfE) entered into a new collaborative agreement with Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) which allowed Northern Irish academics to participate as funded partners

in the SFI Investigators Programme. This was launched as a pilot programme for two years (2014 and 2015), and the University was very successful in attracting over £7 million in funding from the Programme. Unfortunately, DfE has communicated that, due to budgetary issues, they were unable to participate as a partner in the 2016 SFI Investigator Programme Call which is currently underway.

A key objective of the SFI-DfE Partnership Programme was to stimulate and catalyse NI-ROI partnerships to increase participation in future H2020 projects, and suspension of the SFI-DfE Partnership Programme has significant implications for cross-border research alliances and for leveraging large-scale competitive funding at national and European level. Consideration should be given to re-establishing this partnership as it represents a significant opportunity to lever greater levels of investment into the region. We should also be aware of the potential for developing new cross-border links and for using our status as a member of Universities Ireland to maintain links with the EU.

It is essential that the Government address the following:

- Retention of the current mobility programmes, such as Erasmus, and full access for participation in all future mobility programmes.
- Post-Brexit, it is vital that staff and students can continue to travel across the land border unimpeded.
- Strong cooperation and partnerships that exist via the current North-South government structures remain in place.
- It is essential that the EU exit does not impact the University's connections with Britain and is not seen as an obstacle to individuals wishing to travel to NI.
- Re-establish participation of DfE as a partner in the SFI Investigators Programme to facilitate cross-border research collaboration.

3. Conclusion

The University generates significant reputational benefit for NI with a wealth of expertise and networks available to help inform the negotiations. An engaged approach has been adopted in the other devolved regions, whereby universities have been utilised to provide information and advice on a broad range of topics relevant to the EU, including the various institutions, legal issues, practices and negotiating positions. Also, a repository of work published by Queen's academic staff is available on the University website at <http://qub.ac.uk/home/EUReferendum/Brexit-resource/>

NI's greatest, and only, natural resource is its people, and a real opportunity exists to position the region as a world-leading small economy. In 2016, due to the ongoing issues in HE funding, 36% of NI school leavers access HE outside of NI, and statistics show that less than a third return after graduation. In light of the referendum result, it is the University's position that investment in education and skills is of urgent and vital importance to best mitigate the risks associated with the impact of Brexit to the local economy.

The UK decision to leave the EU will have significant implications for the University and its ability to contribute to the broader NI economy, and it is important to recognise the associated challenges and risks. Opportunities will also present themselves in this new

era, and we must continue to build on existing relationships and to collaborate with a wide range of European and international partners.

EU funding enables the University to make a critical contribution to the ongoing development of NI's Knowledge Economy. The recently published 2016 Knowledge Economy Report states,

“The knowledge economy is a vital element of every developed economy around the world as it contributes to and enhances their global competitiveness. This in turn increases their level of economic growth...”

The funding secured by the University, and our commitment to work with partners to attract further income, are vital if the aspiration of a Knowledge Economy is to be realised. This paper outlines the level of EU funding and the importance of this support in enhancing the University's contribution to NI.

The University is committed to working in partnership with the NI Executive, the UK Government, the Irish Government and other relevant bodies, to provide relevant assistance throughout the negotiating period, ensuring the interests of NI are fully advanced, and opportunities are fully leveraged.

It is important to emphasise the potential of the University, in that we are recognised and valued across the EU, with strong networks that can be leveraged to advocate on our behalf.

To date, the University has attracted £56 million of European funding; this underpins the significant research ongoing in the University, which has considerable benefits for our society and enhances the reputation of the region. Given the current and growing financial pressures on public finances, it would place a significant additional burden on the UK Government/NI Executive to replicate this funding post-Brexit.

Key Issues in Summary:

- Access to EU Research Funding: The University has attracted £56 million of EU funding. There should be no restriction or reduction in access to current or future EU funding Programmes.
- Status of current and future EU staff: Confirmation of the continued working rights for current and future EU staff and their dependants in the UK following its exit from the EU.
- Student recruitment and mobility: Confirmation of the immigration status of existing and prospective EU students and their right to remain in the UK for work or further study post-Brexit.
- Relationship with the Republic of Ireland: Staff and students can travel across the land border unimpeded and retain their current and future rights as citizens.

UK Exit Summary Document (Appendix 1)

Issue	Actions
Continued unimpeded access to current and future EU Research Funding	<p>Ensure continued full access to, and influence over, current Framework Programmes (Horizon 2020) and ensure that there is no restriction or reduction in access to EU Research and Innovation Programmes and infrastructures.</p> <p>Ensure continued full access to, and influence over, all future Framework Programmes and ensure that there is no restriction or reduction in access to EU Research and Innovation Programmes and infrastructures.</p>
Status of current and future EU Staff (excluding the UK)	<p>Confirmation of the continued employment and free movement rights for current and future EU staff and their dependants in the UK following its exit from the EU and no detriment suffered thereafter.</p> <p>More generally, decisions regarding immigration should reflect regional needs and clearly recognise the benefits of EU and international academic staff.</p>
Student Recruitment and Mobility	<p>Retention of the current status regarding tuition fees, access to loans, grants and other support for EU students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) considering studying in the UK.</p> <p>Retain existing rights as regards the immigration status of existing and prospective EU students, and their right to remain in the UK for work or further study post-Brexit.</p> <p>If the status quo is not protected, provide clarification on the tuition fee rate, and ability to access student loans, grants or other support, for EU students (both undergraduate and postgraduate) considering studying in the UK in the transition period before Brexit, particularly those starting in 2018-19.</p> <p>Advocate for an evidence-based reform of the current immigration system that more clearly recognises the benefits of international students and, more generally, ensure that decisions regarding immigration reflect regional needs.</p> <p>Implement a comprehensive communications strategy to promote the message that the UK remains open and welcoming to international students, in recognition of the important contribution these students make to our society, economy and our universities.</p> <p>Ensure that future EU academic and student mobility is not impeded by unnecessary bureaucracy, regardless of the immigration status of EU nationals, and that continued participation in Erasmus is secured.</p> <p>Retention of the current mobility programmes such as Erasmus, and full access for participation in all future mobility programmes.</p>
Relationship with the Republic of Ireland	<p>Retention of the current mobility programmes, such as Erasmus, and full access for participation in all future mobility programmes.</p> <p>Post Brexit, it is vital that staff and students can continue to travel across the land border unimpeded.</p> <p>Strong cooperation and partnerships that exist via the current North-South government structures remain in place.</p> <p>It is essential that the EU exit does not impact the University's connections with Britain and is not seen as an obstacle to individuals wishing to travel to NI.</p>

	Re-establish participation of DfE as a partner in the SFI Investigators Programme to facilitate cross-border research collaboration.
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