

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
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16 November 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

As your department prepares to publish a White Paper on immigration, we are writing to highlight the importance of international mobility for research and innovation in the UK and to ask for the opportunity to meet you to discuss this further.

The UK's strength in research and innovation is fundamental to addressing the unprecedented societal, economic and business challenges we face locally, nationally and internationally. As our economic competitors strive to boost their research and technology sectors, the most sought after international talent can choose to go elsewhere. If they are faced with excessive bureaucratic or financial barriers, or if they are given the impression that the UK is becoming more inward-looking, the UK will lose out. It is plain to us that the government will not be able to deliver its ambitious target to invest 2.4% of GDP into UK R&D without ensuring that the UK's immigration system supports research and innovation.

As the Prime Minister highlighted earlier this year "science is an international exercise and discoveries know no borders". The Migration Advisory Committee also recognised that highly-skilled people from around the world contribute to the UK economy and help to create the UK's vibrant and world-leading research and innovation system. Almost 30% of academic staff at UK Universities are non-UK nationals and in some disciplines this is even higher. For example, 64% of our researchers in economics, for which the UK is internationally renowned, are non-UK nationals with 39% from non-UK EU countries and 25% from elsewhere in the world¹. Businesses choose to locate their R&D in the UK because of the diversity of talent that they can access and entrepreneurs' companies and start-ups in all sectors can flourish as the breadth of research and innovation talent in the UK allows them to pioneer new approaches and answer new questions.

To maintain and build this excellence, our universities and businesses need to recruit from a wide pool of talented people with the necessary skills. We must therefore both invest in our people, enabling them to join this highly effective workforce, and ensure that we are open and welcoming to international talent.

The Prime Minister has committed to ensuring that our international workforce does not change when we leave the European Union. It is vital that she is able to deliver on her promise to ensure that UK citizens and people around the world can continue to benefit from cutting-edge research and innovation happening here. However, the current system and its administration is

burdensome to employers and raises arbitrary barriers to the range of skilled people who are important to research and innovation. We estimate that if the UK were to bring EEA nationals in line with the rest of the world after the UK's withdrawal from the EU, this could treble the number of science and research visas being issued annually and it is not clear that the existing system and universities and businesses are equipped for this increased burden.

Future immigration arrangements can more effectively address the UK's skills needs by recognising different career paths and different needs. Many people with highly specialist skills that are critical for successful research and innovation do not work in a PhD level role, nor receive a salary above the UK average. Those studying here may welcome the opportunity to start their career and continue developing their skills and contributing to the UK's knowledge economy before moving elsewhere, such opportunities should be strongly supported. Those choosing to work in the UK may have families that they will want to bring with them. Providing certainty to researchers making decisions over where to live and work is more important than ever to the health of the UK's research and innovation base.

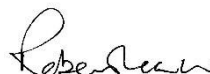
Your vision for the UK to remain a nation with a global outlook that embraces people from across the world, no matter where they are from is welcome. The route to achieving that is a fast, efficient and transparent immigration system that attracts those individuals the UK needs to thrive.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and explore how we can best support your policy development on short- and long-term mobility to enable the UK to solidify its position as a world-leading knowledge economy. We will ask our offices to be in touch to find a suitable date.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Sir Venki Ramakrishnan PRS
President, Royal Society



Professor Sir Robert Lechler PMedSci
President, Academy of Medical Sciences



Professor Dame Ann Dowling OM DBE FEng FRS
President, Royal Academy of Engineering



Professor Sir David Cannadine FBA
President, British Academy

cc The Rt Hon Theresa May MP, Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP - Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP - Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, The Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP - Minister of State for Immigration, Sam Gyimah MP - Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Sir Philip Rutnam - Permanent Secretary, Home Office, Alex Chisholm - Permanent Secretary, The Department for Business, Energy and the Industrial Strategy, Gareth Davies - Director General, Business and Science

ⁱ HESA Staff Record 2016/17 accessed via Heidi Plus online analytics service. Copyright HESA Ltd. Neither HESA nor HESA Services Limited can accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived by third parties from data or other information obtained from Heidi Plus.