

Brexit and post-school education

A guide for UCU branches and members

Policy and Campaigns

December 2016

What's in this pack, and what's it for?

- 1 This guide is designed to allow branches to organise around Brexit and ensure the UK university and college sector remains international, open and welcoming to all.
- 2 It includes a summary of what's at stake and what UCU is concerned about. Included in full is the policy charter developed by UCU that presents our vision for post-school education, post-Brexit. Also included is a model letter to MPs. Finally, another appendix sets out policy agreed by Congress and the national executive committee (NEC) relating to Brexit and immigration.

What branches should do now

- 3 Branches are asked to do three things now:
 - Establish branch policy on Brexit as it relates to your university or college. local institution, as well as the national position contained in the UCU post-Brexit policy charter. Make sure that both members and non-members are aware of the union position.
 - Write to the management requesting they make a joint statement with UCU, endorsing the branch position and calling on the government to do the same. This joint statement should pledge that there will be no changes made to requirements or student fees requirements for any current EU/EEA staff or students arising from any changes introduced by government.

campaign, and the increase in racist and xenophobic attacks reported since the result was announced. A downturn in international enrolments could result in

per cent per year until 2018/19.

- 18 If the immigration laws are changed, current arrangements permitting EU nationals to access FE courses and apprenticeships may be withdrawn, affecting

changes to status, there may be a particular decline in demand for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, leading to course closures.

RESEARCH FUNDING FROM THE EU

What's at stake?

- 8 In HE, HESA reports that 16 per cent of research and development funding received by UK providers in 2014/15 came from overseas sources, and the majority (68 per cent) from within the EU.

EU. According to Universities UK, our universities attracted over £836 million in competitive research grants and contracts from EU sources. This represents 14.2% of all income from research grants and contracts in that year, supporting 8,864 academic jobs. In 2014/15 six institutions reported that EU research income made up over 50 per cent of their total research income.

- 10 In FE, the Association of Colleges has estimated that around 1% of total FE college income (£740und 1% of total 17.5 MC he

Appendix 1: The UCU post-Brexit policy charter

UCU CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO:

- 1 Launch a strategic inquiry on the impact of Brexit on further and higher education
 - Launch an immediate nonpartisan inquiry in consultation with university and college leaders and UCU as representative of academic and related staff.
 - Agree priority Brexit outcomes to ensure further and higher education remains open to staff and students from around the world.
 - Halt the Higher Education and Research Bill to allow universities to focus on dealing with the impact of Brexit and defer any new, untested and potentially damaging actions until the broader political context is clear.
- 2 Protect existing EU staff and students
 - Guarantee the right to remain of existing EU staff and their families by granting
 - Guarantee the right to remain of any EU student who has already been accepted onto a course of further or higher education at a UK institution prior to any agreed cut-off point, even if they have not yet commenced their studies.
- 3 Ensure that UK higher education remains attractive to international talent
 - Retain current visa exemptions for minimum earnings in PhD level jobs, and reintroduce the post study work route for international students.
 - Retain the current exemption for PhD level occupations in higher education if a change in the status of EU nationals means they become subject to Tier 2 visa regulations. This recognises that pay in the higher education sector

£35,000 earnings threshold which applies to most Tier 2 applicants.
- 4 Maintain and strengthen international research relationships
 - Promote international collaboration and ensure continued access to EU research programmes and Erasmus+. EU research partnerships are valuable
- 5 Remove international students from the net migration target
 - Reclassify international students and celebrate their contribution to our universities and colleges.
- 6 Make up any shortfall in funding arising from Brexit
 - Establish the potential loss of research, social fund and fee income arising from Brexit.
 - Invest government funds directly to ensure that institutions do not lost out

including student fees, research programmes and structural funding.
- 7 Protect workers' rights
 - Commit to maintaining the current levels of protection given to EU workers. EU law gives workers vital protections.
 - Oppose barriers to the free movement of staff and students between EU institutions.
- 8 Be transparent on trade policy
 - Ensure that UK trade negotiations are conducted in a transparent way, with appropriate national parliamentary scrutiny to ensure the protection of our public services. The government should note concerns raised in relation to EU trade deals including CETA and TTIP.

Appendix 2: Model letter to MPs

Dear MP

I'm one of your local constituents and I'm writing to ask you to take action on an issue I feel very strongly about.

The UK university and college sector is world leading and makes a substantial social and economic contribution to the UK. Yet universities and colleges are at great risk arising from Brexit. If we are to retain our global position the UK must continue to be a place where academic staff and students are able to come to work or study. The government needs to recognise the international nature of this important sector and act to ensure that EU nationals and indeed those beyond Europe continue to feel welcome at our universities and colleges.

The University and College Union has produced a charter which calls for the government to:

- let current EU staff and students know they are welcome to stay beyond Brexit
- guarantee to match any EU funding lost to universities and colleges
- ensure that future EU students and staff are welcome to study and work in the UK without facing increases in tuition fees
- make international collaboration between UK and EU universities a key part of any Brexit negotiations.

I am writing to ask if you support this charter and will take up its contents with the minister on my behalf.

Yours

6. organise local and national media campaign, highlighting the value of international student and staff
7. campaign with other trade unions, NUS and community groups for the overthrow of restrictive legislation which affects international students and staff and no change in the immigration status of EU residents if UK leaves EU.

NEC resolves to campaign for the following:

1. the continuing right of EU residents for freedom of movement and opposition to any form of Points-Based Immigration Schemes
2. an up-front guarantee for the right of EU/EEA citizens in the UK to stay
3. full recognition of workers' rights throughout EU withdrawal negotiations, including for non-academic staff
4. planned solidarity activity with non-EU colleagues in UCU branches to demand improvement of immigration support for all non-UK staff

NEC further resolves to

1. Include in our UCU guidelines to branches the need to call on their own Vice Chancellor or Principal to commit publicly to:
 - employment or student status of any current EU/EEA Member State and Candidate Country staff and students arising from any change introduced as a consequence of the Brexit negotiations
 - students applying from EU member states and Norway or Switzerland, whatever the results of the Brexit negotiations
 - Demand that the UK government maintain existing rights of free movement of labour across all 28 current EU Member States.
2. Encourage UCU branches to meet with UNISON and other trade unions within the universities to discuss the most effective ways of jointly campaigning for the right to remain for all EU workers and students living in the UK and to maintain freedom of movement of labour across the current 28 EU Member States
3. Publicise the fact that this motion has been passed and encourage UCU branches to do likewise.