



All-Party Parliamentary University Group

Weekly update

5 – 9 May 2025

A regular digest of House of Commons, House of Lords, and higher education sector business.

If you would like more information on parliamentary business, please contact:

Andrea Rezman | appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk

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Parliamentary business

Tackling barriers to educational opportunities in semi-rural areas – WH debate

On Wednesday 7 May, a Westminster Hall debate titled ‘tackling barriers to education opportunities in semi-rural areas’ took place. This debate was tabled by Josh Dean MP (Labour).

Opening the debate, Josh Dean expressed concern over young people being overlooked in semi-rural areas such as Hertford and Bishop’s Stortford - and the challenges that have been left unaddressed.

He warned that issues around connectivity diminish the number of opportunities for young people, making it harder for them to get to school and access work experience opportunities or apprenticeships. For many students, the extra activities outside the school day, such as clubs, trips or sports matches, are out of reach because they cannot get the buses they need to make it home safely.

He also pointed to rising mental health needs and inadequate SEND support, calling for a cross-departmental strategy to address systemic barriers.

Natalie Fleet MP (Labour) noted that in towns like Shirebrook, only 7% of young people take A-levels, compared with 52% nationally. She stated that across her constituency, fewer than one in four 18-year-olds go to university, and fewer than one in five have a degree - half the national average. She highlighted the lack of sixth form provision as one of the main drivers of low aspiration and academic achievement.

Terry Jermy MP (Labour) pointed out concerns over choice barrier and highlighted his personal experience: “I wanted to become a geography teacher, and I was disappointed that my sixth form did not offer that option at A-level. Fine subject as it is, there were just not enough people wanting to study it, and the course was not put on. That was one of the reasons why I ended up not going to university and not becoming a teacher. A lack of choice of subjects is a major issue, and so is the limited choice of places to study.”

Richard Foord MP (Liberal Democrat) raised concerns over digital exclusion and teacher shortages in rural Devon. He welcomed the University of Exeter’s PGCE hubs as a model to improve local teacher recruitment, stating that the model recognises that teachers often stay where they train and where they go to university.

Responding on behalf of the government, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education Stephen Morgan MP reiterated the government's commitment to expanding opportunity. He acknowledged transport as a key barrier and highlighted the 16-19 bursary scheme and regional rail discounts. He confirmed ongoing investment in mental health support teams and additional SEND funding, including £1 billion for high-needs budgets and £740 million in capital funding for new specialist school places.

The Minister concluded by stating the government would continue to work across departments to address the specific needs of semi-rural learners and ensure that "geography does not determine opportunity."

You can [watch the session](#) and [read a transcript](#).

Eliminating antisemitism on university campuses – HoL short debate

On Wednesday 7 May, the House of Lords held a short debate on 'antisemitism on university campuses.' The debate was tabled by Lord Cryer (Labour).

Opening the debate, Lord Cryer raised deep concerns about the sharp rise in antisemitism on UK university campuses and urged the government to take firm action. He highlighted recent reports from the Community Security Trust (CST) and the Union of Jewish Students (UJS), which revealed significant increases in antisemitic incidents—from 117% to 413% over recent academic years. Drawing on the recently published StandWithUs report, he cited examples of Jewish students being harassed, threatened, or silenced during peaceful events and vigils. Concluding his remarks, Lord Cryer called on the government to consider launching an inquiry into antisemitism in higher education and to expand Holocaust education in the national curriculum. He warned that without decisive action, universities risk becoming breeding grounds for antisemitism.

Lord Leigh (Conservative) described the current situation as deeply alarming, citing the newly released StandWithUs report, which supported the fact that high levels of antisemitic abuse now seemed 'normal' on campus. He also criticised the lack of consistent government action, noting that while the Prime Minister had acknowledged the problem in a speech to the Holocaust Educational Trust, an education minister had failed to mention campus antisemitism at a major Universities UK conference. He called for joined-up action, demanding that universities be held to account for adopting and enforcing the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

In her remarks, Baroness Deech (crossbench) noted that the situation of antisemitism on campus was deteriorating, and no remedial action has been taken. She said she

had little faith in more inquiries, stating that the problems and remedies were already clear. Instead, she demanded implementation and enforcement. She criticised universities for offering hollow, generic statements instead of taking action. She also called for the Office for Students (OfS) and the government to impose fines, suspend or expel perpetrators, and tie student union funding to legal compliance.

Lord Mann (Labour) cautioned government against merely describing antisemitism on campuses without taking concrete action. While acknowledging the severity of the issue, Lord Mann provided a comparative reassurance, stating that the situation in the UK was significantly better than in the United States, where incidents are far more extreme and frequent. He highlighted a key strength in the UK: the UJS, which he described as stronger, braver, and better organised than previously. Lord Mann echoed Baroness Deech's view that another report was not needed and that what was needed from government was to empower Jewish students and also to recognise that the biggest single factor in the 2024/25 academic year was the experience to Jewish academic staff.

While affirming the importance of freedom of expression in academic settings, Lord Gold (Conservative) stressed that universities must draw a clear line when speech crosses into hatred, and that robust disciplinary action was essential. Though over 200 universities had adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism, Lord Gold criticised its application as often inconsistent and merely symbolic. He called for concrete action: meaningful training, swift and transparent disciplinary procedures, and independent complaint mechanisms. Lord Gold also proposed stronger government intervention, including ensuring vice-chancellors take personal responsibility, linking university funding to antisemitism prevention, and revoking visas for international students who incite racial hatred.

Baroness Berger (Labour) drew on her own experience from over 20 years ago and expressed deep concern that the same issues persist today—only now, with greater intensity, including violent attacks. While acknowledging the abuse, intimidation, and marginalisation that Jewish students faced, she also highlighted the resilience and pride in Jewish campus life. She criticised institutional inaction, stating that it was unacceptable for Jewish students to carry the burden of reporting antisemitism while universities failed to respond adequately. She warned that without change, some campuses risked becoming 'Jewish free', with parents already steering children away from certain institutions.

Baroness Altmann (Non-affiliated) said that the integrity and inclusivity of higher education was under threat given the experiences of Jewish students. She said it felt as though 'Islamist groups had infiltrated our universities at all levels' and asked whether the Minister would consider fines for universities and the removal of student union funding from those that were 'peddling hate.'

Lord Turnberg (Labour) recounted experiences of Jewish students on campus, probing the Minister when the meeting between government and university vice-chancellors would take place, and what pressure would be put on institutions to support Jewish students.

Lord Howarth of Newport (Labour) raised the reports of antisemitism behaviour by academics, describing a twin problem of 'ignorant or bigoted academics, and vice-chancellors too scared to face down the mob on campus.' He cautioned against government regulating the internal affairs of universities and said it was academics that should be the ones 'articulating the principles that matter, leading public debate, and invigilating the politicians.'

Baroness Foster of Oxtou (Conservative) highlighted rising antisemitism and said it was 'only a matter of time until it would spill over on to the university campuses.' She said that universities received considerable public funding but that leaders had 'abrogated' their responsibility and should be removed accordingly. She explained that one of the reasons that leaders acted this way was because they received millions in overseas funding.

Lord Mitchell (Labour) reflected on his experience as Chair of the Coexistence Trust and progress they made to bring Muslim and Jewish students into positive social contact with one another. He said it was shocking to see the institutional ignorance of the beliefs and traditions and that the issue of antisemitism did not emanate solely from the students. He urged that more interchange was needed but also that university leaders needed to be 'cajoled into changing their lazy indifference and reminded that they have a duty of care to all students.'

Lord Walney (Crossbench) said it was deeply disturbing that extremist ideology had been adopted by many students at UK universities as the StandWithUs UK report identified. He warned that if university administrators failed to enforce adequate sanctions and some university staff even felt emboldened to participate in it, then it was not a surprise that anti-Jewish racism and intolerance spread so widely among the student body. He implored the government to carefully read the recommendations in the StandWithUs UK report.

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar (Conservative) outlined the safety measures that Jewish students were having to take amidst rising antisemitism on campus. He said he would like to see a day when Jewish societies could publicise their addresses for meetings and that a university where Jewish students were not welcome was an institution that had 'forfeited its right to call itself a university.'

Responding on behalf of government, Baroness Smith of Malvern stated that the government 'utterly condemn antisemitism in the strongest possible terms' and are 'actively taking steps to prevent and tackle it at university.' She outlined the meetings

she had held with stakeholders such as StandWithUs, the University Jewish Chaplaincy (UJC), and the Birmingham University Jewish Society. The Minister said the government was committed to ensuring that universities took concerted action to prevent and tackle antisemitism and stressed that this needed to be led from the very top of universities.

The Minister highlighted government support via the £7 million allocated to antisemitism training as well as an innovation fund to provide opportunities for more creative methods to tackle antisemitism in universities, schools, and colleges.

On interactions with the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act, the Minister said the new way in which the government was delivering the Act would help to alleviate some of the issues facing Jewish students.

The Minister concluded her remarks by recognising the efforts that university vice-chancellor, staff, Jewish societies, and the UJS were taking to foster cohesion on campuses across the country while stressing there was more progress to be made.

You can [watch the debate](#) and [read a transcript](#).

Antisemitism on university campuses – HoC Business Questions

On Thursday 9 May, the following exchange took place during House of Commons Business Questions:

Bob Blackman MP (Conservative): Yesterday, the renowned charity, StandWithUs, published a report on antisemitism on university campuses. Dozens of students have given their testimony to the failure of universities to protect them and their rights. They have come out with a series of recommendations, including sanctions against universities that failed to protect students and an independent inquiry to get to the bottom of why universities are not protecting students. Can we have a statement next week from the relevant Minister on what is going to happen to make sure that Jewish students are protected on our campuses?

Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP: I thank the Chair of the Backbench Business Committee for announcing the forthcoming Backbench Business. I thank him, too, for all his work. He raises an important report that is out this week. This Government stand firm on antisemitism. We need to root it out on all our university campuses, and wherever it exists in our society. I will ensure that he gets a full update from the relevant Minister.

You can [watch the session](#) and [read a transcript](#).

Forthcoming business

Encouraging scientists from around the world to do their research and work in the UK – HoL oral question

On Tuesday 13 May, an oral question ‘encouraging scientists from around the world to their research and work in the UK’ will take place in the House of Lords. This oral question has been tabled by Viscount Stansgate (Labour).

You can [watch the session](#).

Employment Rights Bill – committee stage (day 3)

On Tuesday 13 May, the Employment Rights Bill will be scrutinised in its third day of Committee Stage in the House of Lords.

You can [watch the session](#).

Industrial Strategy – Business and Trade Committee oral evidence

On Tuesday 13 May from 2:30pm, the House of Commons Business and Trade Committee will hear oral evidence as part of their ongoing ‘Industrial Strategy’ inquiry.

Witnesses include:

- 2:30pm:
 - o Andrew Forzani, Government Chief Commercial Officer at Cabinet Office
 - o Andrew New, Chief Executive Officer at NHS Supply Chain
- 3:30pm:
 - o Lord Livermore, Financial Secretary to the Treasury
 - o The Baroness Gustafsson CBE, Minister for Investment
 - o The Rt Hon. the Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister for Skills
 - o Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade

You can [watch the session](#).

Science Innovation & Technology – oral questions

On Wednesday 14 May from 11:30am, the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation, and Technology, Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP, and his ministerial colleagues will answer oral questions in the House of Commons.

You can [read a list of tabled questions](#) and [watch the session](#).

Written questions and statements

Higher Education: Admissions

Mary Kelly Foy MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of introducing student number controls to address competition in the sector. [UIN 47318]

Janet Daby MP: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education will set out a plan for reform of the higher education sector in the summer. These reforms will ensure our world-leading sector can provide the skills required to deliver economic growth through the industrial strategy and support the wider changes the country needs in the years to come.

As part of this plan, the department will focus on providers' efficiency and effectiveness, increasing collaboration with other skills providers, strengthening the civic role of providers and ensuring the right improvement and stronger alignment of provision with the needs of students and the economy.

Higher Education: Finances

Mary Kelly Foy MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing an alternative to the fee-based funding model for higher education. [UIN 47317]

Janet Daby MP: The higher education (HE) sector needs a secure financial footing to face the challenges of the next decade and to ensure that all students can be confident they will receive the world-class HE experience they deserve. This is why, after seven years of frozen fee caps under the previous government, we have taken the difficult decision to increase maximum tuition fee limits for the 2025/26 academic year by 3.1%, in line with the forecast rate of inflation.

The government believes in the principle that a fee-based funding model and income-contingent student loan repayment system is the most equitable way of ensuring that individuals who have benefited directly from HE make a fair contribution towards its cost. Upfront tuition fee loans have allowed many more students, including disadvantaged students, to access HE through removing financial barriers so that everyone with the ability and desire to enter HE can do so.

Student loans have important protections for borrowers. Monthly repayments depend on earnings, not on interest rates or the amount borrowed, and no-one who

earns under the student loan repayment threshold is required to make any repayments at all. At the end of the loan term, any outstanding loan balance, including interest built up, will be written off with no detriment to the borrower.

The department will publish its plan for broader HE reform this summer and work with the sector and the Office for Students to deliver the change that the country needs.

Overseas Students: Visas

Liz Jarvis MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of changes to visa rules for dependants of Master's students on international student recruitment. [UIN 46915]

Janet Daby MP: There are many factors that influence international students when they choose to study abroad. These include the range and quality of available courses, the visa rules that apply in countries they are considering, and the appeal of living and studying in those countries.

Several changes were made to the immigration system in 2024, restricting international students from bringing family members with them to the UK unless they are studying a PhD, doctorate or research-based higher degree. These restrictions will be continued, as confirmed by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department in early February, in line with the government's commitment to manage migration carefully.

This government has made clear its overall approach to international students. We will continue to welcome international students who enrich our university campuses, forge lifelong friendships with our domestic students and become global ambassadors for the UK.

Skills England: Parliamentary Scrutiny

Charlotte Cane MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that Skills England is subject to parliamentary scrutiny. [UIN 47027]

Janet Daby MP: As an Executive Agency, Skills England will be subject to clear requirements on governance, transparency and accountability as set out by the Cabinet Office and applying across government.

A sponsor Minister within the department will be accountable to Parliament on all matters concerning Skills England, including the policy framework within which it

operates, ensuring it meets its strategic objectives and, in doing so, delivers value for money.

Skills England will be led by a Chief Executive, who will be directly accountable to a relevant departmental sponsor Minister for delivery and day to day activities. They will also be accountable to the sponsor department's Permanent Secretary for responsible use of public funds, via formal designation as Accounting Officer for the agency.

A framework document will be agreed between the department and Skills England, which will be approved by HM Treasury. This will set out the governance and accountability framework within which Skills England and the department will operate and will be publicly available.

In line with other Executive Agencies, and as set out in the Public Bodies Handbook, Skills England will regularly publish information on the execution of its functions. This will include an annual report, which sponsor ministers are required to publish to ensure Parliament is kept informed of Skills England's activities.

The IfATE (Transfer of Functions etc) Bill also requires my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, to publish and lay before Parliament, within six months after the closure of IfATE, a report setting out which of the functions in this Bill are being exercised by Skills England and the impact of this on apprenticeships and technical education in England.

Education: China

John Hayes MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate her Department has made of the level of funding from Chinese firms into the UK education sector in the next ten years. [UIN 48087]

Janet Daby MP: HM Government carefully considers the security implications of proposed investments, to reach a balanced decision between UK economic growth and national security.

As an open economy, the UK benefits from foreign trade and investment where it supports growth and jobs in the UK, meets our stringent legal and regulatory requirements and does not compromise our national security. No accurate estimates of future investments can be made for specific sectors.

NHS: Staff

Peter Prinsley MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to establish a cross-departmental ministerial taskforce with the Department for Education to support workforce planning between the higher education sector and the health service. [UIN 48688]

Karin Smyth MP: The Department of Health and Social Care works closely with the Department for Education on a wide range of matters to ensure cross-departmental collaboration on workforce planning in higher education and the healthcare service.

We have launched the 10-Year Health Plan, which will set out a bold agenda to reform and repair the National Health Service. Ensuring we have the right people, in the right places, and with the right skills, will be central to this vision.

Dentistry: Surgery

Helen Hayes MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support prospective students training to become Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons with the costs of dual degree qualifications. [UIN 48993]

Karin Smyth MP: A qualification in both medicine and dentistry is required to become an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon.

If studying medicine or dentistry as a first degree, domestic students can access student loans from Student Finance England (SFE) from years one to four. From year five of an undergraduate course, and from year two of a graduate-entry course, medical and dental students can access the NHS Bursary. The NHS Bursary is non-repayable, and comprises of payments towards tuition fees and, where eligible, further grants and allowances.

Students undertaking an undergraduate medical or dental course as a second degree are expected to self-fund their tuition fees for the first four years, but can apply to SFE for a means-tested maintenance loan. From their fifth year, eligible students can apply for the NHS Bursary.

Medical and dental students who study the second degree via an accelerated graduate-entry course can apply to SFE for a partial tuition fee loan, and a partially means-tested maintenance loan in year one. They can then apply for an NHS Bursary from the second year of study.

For the 2025 to 2026 academic year, the Government has announced that maximum loans and grants for living and other costs from SFE will increase by the forecast

inflation of 3.1%. The Government will also increase the NHS Bursary tuition fee contributions, maintenance grants, and all allowances by 3.1% for the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Universities: China

Richard Holden MP: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of Chinese influence in UK universities on national security. [UIN 48558]

Janet Daby MP: The first duty of the government is to keep the country safe, and we will always protect our national security and values. We expect the sector to be alert to a range of risks when collaborating with international partners, and to conduct appropriate due diligence to comply with legislation. There are a set of measures that protect against undue foreign interference in our universities, ranging from the Academic Technology Approval Scheme, which vets students and researchers seeking to study in sensitive areas, to the provisions of the Higher Education Freedom of Speech Act 2023, which offer a focused route for concerns to be escalated, including relating to foreign interference in academic freedom and free speech. In England, providers are also required to have adequate and effective management and governance arrangements and must ensure that decisions are taken without direction, coercion or covert influence.

As a matter of longstanding policy, the department is unable to release information regarding assessments on the grounds of national security. The UK welcomes international partnerships and students, including from China, who make a very positive impact on the UK's higher education sector, our economy and society as a whole.

STEM subjects: Girls

Andrew Mitchell (Conservative) (Sutton Coldfield): (48364) To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans she has to encourage more girls into STEM subjects in (a) further and (b) higher education.

Catherine McKinnell (Labour) (Newcastle upon Tyne North): High and rising school standards are central to the government's mission to break down barriers and provide every child with the best start in life. As part of this, the department supports various initiatives to encourage more girls into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

The 'I Belong' programme, part of the National Centre for Computing Education, helps schools understand barriers to girls' engagement with computing and aims to increase computer science qualification uptake in primary and secondary schools.

To build a strong mathematics foundation for all children, the Maths Hubs programme improves teaching in publicly funded schools. Supported by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics, the programme addresses attainment gaps linked to disadvantage, gender or other factors.

The STEM Ambassadors programme features over 28,000 volunteers from more than 7,500 employers, inspiring over 3 million young people annually by sharing personal experiences in STEM careers. 48% of the volunteers are women.

To provide careers information and guidance, the Careers and Enterprise Company, supported by £30 million of government funding, coordinates a careers hub network covering 95% of secondary schools and colleges, involving 400 employers and 4,000 business volunteers, many in STEM roles.

Sector news

Open letter on REF 2029 – London Universities’ Council for Academic Freedom

On Tuesday 6 May, the London Universities’ Council for Academic Freedom published a letter they had written to the government and research councils expressing their opposition to proposed people, culture and environment reforms in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029.

In the letter, the group warns that ‘the proposals pose serious risks to research integrity and quality, to academic freedom and to institutional autonomy and diversity.’ They ‘urge ministers and UKRI to look closely at these proposals and consider whether they are fit for purpose and support the proper priorities of universities and funding bodies.’

You can [read the full letter](#).

Universities grip financial crisis, but at what cost to the nation? – UUK survey release

On Tuesday 6 May, Universities UK published results from a survey revealing the full of extent of cost cutting measures universities are taking following years of tuition fees being frozen and government action to reduce international student numbers.

Key findings:

- A majority of respondents are making operational cutbacks to deal with growing financial pressures, including reducing investment in repairs and maintenance.
- Choices available to students are being reduced: 49% have closed courses; 55% have consolidated some courses; 46% have removed module options, and 18% have closed departments.
- 19% have reduced investment in Research, with 79% considering future reductions.
- Universities are trying to protect investment in student hardship and bursary funding, this being the area least likely to have faced cuts so far. However, almost half say they may need to consider this in the next three years.

Vivienne Stern, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said: “University leaders are gripping the problem. UUK is working to help them through our Efficiency and Transformation Taskforce, which will publish its first outputs in the next few weeks. But we need governments in all four nations of the UK to do their bit.”

You can [read the full press release](#).

HoC Education Committee letter to the Secretary of State for Education

On Tuesday 6 May, the House of Commons Education Committee wrote to the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP. The letter followed a one-off evidence session that the Committee held on higher education.

The letter outlines the evidence that the Committee heard and warns that ‘there are currently a number of very serious challenges facing the higher education sector which, if left unchecked, present a grave risk to the financial viability of some institutions and courses.’

The Committee has requested a response by Wednesday 14 May.

You can [read the full letter](#).

HoL Science & Technology Committee letter to the Prime Minister, Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Minister for Science

On Tuesday 6 May, the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee wrote to the Prime Minister, Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Minister for Science concerning the UK’s immigration and visa policy for STEM talent.

In the letter, the Committee calls on the government to use the Immigration White Paper to ‘rectify the situation where it is putting up unnecessarily high barriers to the global talent that want to live and work here, harming the national interest and in stark contrast to the actions of other nations.’

You can [read the full letter](#).

Global talent, local growth: the export and job benefit of international students in the UK

On Wednesday 7 May, Public First published a report examining the export and job benefits of international students in the UK. This report was commissioned by the University of York.

Key findings include:

- The gross export value of higher education from international students is £20.1 billion a year.
- In 26 constituencies in the country, higher education is the single largest export sector, supporting 183,000 jobs.
- Of the 102 constituencies where higher education is in the top 3 for exports, 87 are currently held by Labour.

You can [read the full report](#).

Annual financial sustainability report – OfS

On Thursday 8 May, the Office for Students (OfS) published new data showing that the financial performance of universities and colleges is forecast to decline in 2024-25 for the third consecutive year.

The data shows that levels of surplus and liquidity are expected to decline across the sector, with 43 per cent of institutions included in the analysis forecasting a deficit for 2024-25. This contrasts with last year's forecasts made by institutions, which suggested an improvement in financial performance for 2024-25. The primary reason for the deterioration is lower than anticipated levels of recruitment of international students.

The report finds that many universities and colleges are taking steps to address financial risks, and this work needs to continue in future years. Many institutions have ongoing cost reduction programmes to help underpin their financial sustainability. Some are reducing the number of courses they offer, while others are selling assets that are no longer needed.

Philippa Pickford, Director of Regulation at the OfS, said: ‘Our independent analysis, drawn from data institutions have submitted, once again starkly sets out the challenges facing the sector. The sector is forecasting a third consecutive year of decline in financial performance, with more than four in ten institutions expecting a deficit this year.’

Vivienne Stern MBE, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said: ‘While deeply sobering, this report from the OfS is unlikely to surprise anyone in the sector, or in Whitehall for that matter. Falling per-student funding, visa changes which have decreased international enrolments, and a longstanding failure of research grants to cover costs have been creating huge pressures in all four nations of the UK which are now reaching breaking point.’

You can [read the full report](#).

Cross sector letter on international R&D talent – CaSE

On Thursday 8 May, the Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) wrote to Westminster Parliamentarians who have shown support for R&D as well as members of the Commons Science Innovation and Technology, Education, and Home Affairs Committees and the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee.

The letter signed by CaSE and 36 other organisation restates the importance of attracting international talent to the UK’s R&D and university sectors for economic growth, and the potential consequences of any negative changes to immigration policy.

You can [read the full letter](#).

HoC Science, Innovation, & Technology Committee letter to the Minister for Science

On Thursday 8 May, the House of Commons Science, Innovation & Technology Committee wrote to the Minister for Science, Lord Vallance of Balham.

The letter urges that, in light of cuts to US government science programmes, the government should take further steps to support such scientists. It notes that relaxing visa requirements for this group would bolster scientific capabilities and ensure valuable work can continue.

The following questions are put to the Minister:

- What is the UK doing to specifically attract US scientists who may be looking to leave due to budgetary cuts and other policies of the current administration?
- Will the UK implement a special visa system, or similar, to reduce the costs of attracting top talent leaving the US?

The Committee has requested a response by Friday 23 May.

You can [read the full letter](#).

University spinouts to grow industries of the future with new government backing – DSIT press release

On Friday 9 May, the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) announced that four innovative UK hubs across Merseyside, East Anglia, the Midlands, and Northeast England will receive funding to grow more spinouts.

New £30 million funding will support a taskforce of universities and industry experts across the four locations to take advantage of the opportunity. The four projects receiving funding from Research England include:

- Strategic Commercialisation Ecosystem North East (SCENE)
- Forging ahead/Forging beyond
- Biologics Regional Innovation and Technology Ecosystem (BRITE)
- Agri-Tech Commercialisation Ecosystems (ACE)

Announcing the news on a visit to Aston University, the Minister for Science, Lord Vallance said: ‘The UK is home to some of the world’s best universities...but we can and must do more to unlock scientific research’s vast economic potential, and to help our innovators world-leading public sector labs turn brilliant ideas into businesses that attract investment and sustain jobs.’

You can [read the full press release](#).

