



Parliamentarian briefing

Date: Wednesday 29 November, 17:30 – 18:30

Location: House of Commons Committee Room 17 (please note this has changed from House of Lords Committee Room 1)

Contact on the day: Tom Lewis (APPUG secretariat) 07456 701260

Followed by dinner in House of Commons Dining Room C from 6.45pm (see attendee list).

Background to the APPUG and this discussion

The All-Party Parliamentary University Group (APPUG) acts as a key avenue of communication between parliamentarians and vice-chancellors of the UK's universities and examines issues affecting the country's university sector and possible policy responses.

The UK is world-leading in science, research and innovation, and universities are at the centre of this research excellence, making life-changing discoveries, attracting billions in inward investment across the UK, and creating the jobs and businesses of the future.

This panel discussion, chaired by Daniel Zeichner MP, will bring together experts to discuss the opportunities and barriers for universities in commercialising research, and how to ensure successful university spinouts remain in the UK and maximise their contribution to regional growth and productivity. It will also discuss the recommendations of the Independent Review of University Spin-outs, published on Tuesday 21 November.

The meeting comes at an opportune time, allowing university leaders and parliamentarians to learn more about the Independent review of university spin-out companies and share experiences of commercialising research. The group would be open to writing to the newly appointed Minister for Science, Research and Innovation after the meeting to set out the topics covered by the discussion, and any particular areas in which universities need further support and invite him to meet with members in the near future.

Agenda

5:30pm – 5:35pm	Introductory remarks from Daniel Zeichner MP, Chair of the APPUG
5:35pm – 5:45pm	Professor Irene Tracey (Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford and co-lead of the Independent Review of University Spin-outs)
5:45pm – 5:55pm	Dr Alison Callwood (CEO and co-founder of Sammi-Select)
5:55pm – 6:05pm	Professor Karen O'Brien, Vice-Chancellor and Warden of Durham University
6:05pm – 6:30pm	Chatham House Q&A



Speaker biographies

Daniel Zeichner MP, Chair - APPUG



Daniel was elected MP for Cambridge in 2015. He has served as Chair of the APPG for Universities since 2020.

He currently serves as Shadow Minister for Food, Farming and Fisheries.

Prior to becoming an MP, Daniel studied history at King's College, Cambridge and went on to work in IT at Shire Hall and later at Philips and Perkins Engines.

Professor Irene Tracey, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford



Irene serves as Vice Chancellor of the University of Oxford. She co-led the [independent review of university spinouts](#) and is a member of the Medical Research Council of UK Research and Innovation.

She is also Professor of Anaesthetic Neuroscience in the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences.

Irene will discuss the findings of the Independent Review of University Spin-outs and reflect on how innovation ecosystems can be improved.

Professor Karen O'Brien, Vice-Chancellor and Warden of Durham University



Karen serves as Vice-Chancellor and Warden of Durham University.

She joined Durham University in January 2022 after leading the Humanities Division at the University of Oxford.

Karen will share Durham's experience in commercialising research and supporting spin-outs. She will also share the work that Durham University does with the [Northern Accelerator](#).

Dr Alison Callwood, CEO and co-founder of Sammi-Select



Alison is a senior lecturer in Integrated Care at the University of Surrey.

She co-founded [Sammi-Select](#) in 2020 as a spinout from the University of Surrey. Sammi-Select brings integrity in a data-driven, co-design approach to candidate selection.

Alison will reflect on her experience as a co-founder of a spin-out company, including any successes and barriers she encountered.

Attendees

Name:	Title:	Institution:	Attending dinner:
Professor Jenny Higham	Vice-Chancellor	St George's, University of London	Yes
Professor Richard Greene	Deputy Vice-Chancellor	De Montfort University	Yes
Professor Andrew Jones	Vice-Chancellor and President	Brunel University London	Yes
Professor Leon Terry	Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Innovation	Cranfield University	Yes
Mrs Wendy Appleby	Vice-President Operations	University of Southampton	No
Professor Paul Bissell	Pro Vice-Chancellor	University of Chester	No
Professor Trevor McMillan OBE	Vice-Chancellor	Keele University	Yes
Dr Julian Coleman	Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Knowledge Exchange)	University of Bolton	No
Professor Rusi Jaspal	Pro Vice-Chancellor – Research & Knowledge Exchange	University of Brighton	TBC
Chris Evans	Director Exeter Innovation	University of Exeter	No
Professor Jean-Noel Ezingard	Vice-Chancellor	University of Roehampton	No
Caroline Fleming	Director of Surrey Innovation District	University of Surrey	No
Professor Andrea Nelson	Pro Vice-Chancellor Research	Glasgow Caledonian University	No
Professor Kathryn Mitchell	Vice-Chancellor	University of Derby	Yes
Andy Lavender	Vice-Principal & Director of Production Arts	Guildhall School of Music and Drama	No

Sarah Kemp	Pro Vice-Chancellor for Engagement	Lancaster University	No
Professor Catherine Cole	Faculty of Arts Professional and Social Studies	Liverpool John Moores University	No
Dr Mark Gray	Pro Vice-Chancellor Director of Knowledge Transfer	Middlesex University	No
Mr Brian McCaul	CEO, QUBIS	Queen's University Belfast	No
Professor Mark Fellows	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Strategy, Planning & Resource)	Royal Holloway, University of London	No
Professor Stuart Humphries	Dean of Research Environment	University of Lincoln	Yes
Professor Wayne Cranton	Dean of Research	Sheffield Hallam University	No
Baroness Verma	Peer	House of Lords (Conservative)	No
Lord Gold	Peer	House of Lords (Conservative)	Yes
Baroness Garden of Frognal	Peer	House of Lords (Liberal Democrat)	Yes
Baroness Young of Old Scone	Peer	House of Lords (Labour)	Yes
Margaret Hodge MP	MP	House of Commons (Labour)	Yes
Matt Western MP	MP	House of Commons (Labour)	No
Harriet Glyn-Jones	Political Affairs Manager	Universities UK	No
Tom Lewis	Political Affairs Assistant	Universities UK	No

Appendix – summary of the independent review of university spin-out companies

On Tuesday 21 November, the '[Independent review of university spin-out companies](#)' was published. This review ran from March to October 2023 and was led by:

- Professor Irene Tracey CBE, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford and member of the Medical Research Council (MRC) of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).
- Dr Andrew Williamson, Managing Partner of Cambridge Innovation Capital and Chair of the Venture Capital Committee at the British Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (BVCA).



The All-Party Parliamentary University Group

The review looked at the most successful university spin-out ecosystems across the world, and within the UK, to identify best practices and opportunities to support spin-outs to generate greater investment and faster growth in the UK.

The review is part of the government's ambition for the UK to be science and technology superpower, with thriving partnerships between universities and high-tech spin-out companies contributing to economic growth and productivity.

The recommendations are intended to accelerate the UK towards a desired end state where:

- Universities partner with their local spin-out ecosystem to prioritise the rapid creation of spin-outs on market competitive terms.
- Academics are encouraged and better enabled to realise impact from their ideas through spin-outs.
- Universities develop an entrepreneurial culture throughout the entire institution.
- Founders can access the right commercial support to create successful spin-out.

The recommendations of the review are:

Recommendation 1: Accelerate towards innovation-friendly university policies that all parties, including investors, should adhere to where they are underpinned by guidance co-developed between investors, founders, and universities.

Recommendation 2: More data and transparency on spin-outs through a national register of spin-outs, and universities publishing more information about their typical deal terms. The Higher Education Statistics Authority's ongoing review of the Higher Education Business & Community Interaction (HE-BCI) dataset must present solutions to improve the reliability of data on spin-outs.

Recommendation 3: Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) should be used to reduce the need for universities to cover the costs of technology transfer offices (TTOs) from spin-out income. Given that HEIF equivalents are lower in the devolved administrations, the devolved governments may want to consider the findings of this review and provide additional support for their universities.

Recommendation 4: Create shared TTOs to help build scale and critical mass in the spin-out space for smaller research universities. These could be operated through collaboration with established university TTOs and could be implemented at a regional or sector-wide level. We note that the latter may be particularly of interest to spin-outs from the social sciences, humanities, and the arts.

Recommendation 5: Government should increase funding for proof-of-concept funds to develop confidence in the concept prior to spinning-out. These should integrate with the timing and offering of commercialisation support and venture-building programmes. Investors should lend their expertise to assessing funding bids for proof-of-concept and translational funds.

Recommendation 6: In developing the 'engagement & impact' and 'people & culture' elements of the 2028 Research Excellence Framework (REF), the four Higher Education Funding Bodies should ensure that the guidance and criteria strongly emphasise the importance of research commercialisation, spin-outs, and social ventures as a form of research impact. We encourage spin-outs to assist universities in drafting impact studies for REF.



Recommendation 7: Founders need access to support from individuals and organisations with experience of operating successful high-tech start-ups, regardless of the region founders are based in or sector they operate in.

Recommendation 8: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) should ensure that all PhD students they fund have a voluntary option of attending high-quality entrepreneurship training and increase the opportunities for them to undertake internships in local spinouts, venture capital firms or TTOs.

Recommendation 9: Recognising the important role that university-affiliated funds have played in helping spin-outs from some regions access finance, universities considering working with new affiliated investment funds should continue to ensure they are still able to attract a wider set of investors and encourage competition when agreeing such deals.

Recommendation 10: Government should continue its reforms to ensure that UK capital markets are able to provide the financing to incentivise companies to stay in the UK.

Recommendation 11: Government should improve the provision of funds to enable movement or porosity between academia and industry, including through:

- Funds that 'buy out' academic time to focus on commercial partnerships and potential ventures. Or adapting funds for industry collaboration to be more accessible to spinout founders.
- An 'academic returner' fellowship for researchers wishing to return to academia from the private sector.