

COU16D022

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(1) Confirmation that the Privy Council has approved amendments to Statute 7 and that these amendments will take effect from 1 December 2016. Council had previously approved the amendments by Special Resolution on 14 March 2016 (COU15D040, COU15M007, minute 55).

(2) Sealings

To report

that since the meeting of the Council held on 10 October 2016, the University seal has been affixed to the following documents:

4057 *Counterpart Renewal Lease by Reference to an Existing Lease – Mary Chapman Court. (1) City Council of Norwich (2) University of East Anglia*

4058 *Parking Spaces Licence between (1) City Council of Norwich (2) University of East Anglia*

4059 *Deed of Implementation of a Cost Sharing Group. (1) UEA (2) UEA INTO Holdings Ltd (3) INTO UEA LLP (4) IUP 2 LLP (5) INTO University Partnerships Ltd (6) INTO Global Service Centre Ltd*

4060 *Deed of Variation to a Limited Liability Partnership Agreement. (1) UEA (2) UEA INTON Holdings Ltd (3) IUP 2 LLP*

4061 *Deed of Variation to a Branding & Services Agreement. (1) UEA (2) INTO UEA LLP (3) IUP 2 LLP.*

(3) The House of Commons Education Committee Inquiry into 'The Impact of Brexit on Higher Education – Written Submission from the University of East Anglia

1. The likely impact of the UK exiting the EU on EU students studying in England

1.1 The University of East Anglia (UEA) is a research-intensive university, founded in 1963, and based on an attractive campus in Norwich. The University hosts approximately 17,000 students across a broad range of programmes in faculties of arts and humanities, medicine and health, science and social sciences.

1.2 It is of huge importance to UEA that the UK is able to attract bright and talented students to come and study here. UEA currently admits well over 300 students per year from the EU27. Over the past five years, the number of EU applicants accepting an undergraduate place at UEA rose from 120 in 2012/13 to 318 in 2016/17, and we had been planning to grow this further across all disciplines. Over the same time period, the equivalent figure for

postgraduate taught Masters courses rose from 73 to 101, with growth particularly focussed in the social sciences.

- 1.3 Of our postgraduate research students, 17% come from non-UK EU countries (229 FTE out of 1,370 FTE). Many (currently 77%) are funded by sources (University or Research Council) which could be redistributed to UK candidates, while others are self-funded or funded by non-UK governments or EU funding. One of the reasons UK universities are considered outstanding on the world stage is because of our ability to recruit the very best research students from around the world.
- 1.4 The potential downside risks, in terms of students, arising from the UK leaving the EU are:
 - o The number of non-UK EU students coming to the UK falls, with both a cultural and economic effect;
 - o The UK is perceived as being less welcoming to *any* overseas students, further damaging our ability to recruit international students from beyond Europe.
- 1.5 The 2016 and 2017 commitments on EU students' loan status were welcome. They have helped provide reassurance for the 2016 entry and we saw very little drop-off in admissions. We do, however, note that some applicants (including at least one postgraduate research student to whom full funding was offered) have turned down offers citing fear of hate crime against EU nationals within the UK. This is despite Norwich's reputation as a safe and welcoming city and our very low figures for crimes of this type locally.
- 1.6 Uncertainty about loans status for 2017 entry had caused serious uncertainty around recruitment, but the Government announcement of 11th October 2016 on the loans status for the 2017/18 intake has also been most welcome. UEA had provided a guarantee on fees status to potential 2017 entrants, following taking legal advice.
- 1.7 UEA participated in a summer school workshop in August/September 2016 involving students from 7 different UK institutions. Discussions with existing EU students from those universities suggested that their perceptions of the political situation in the UK had been strongly negatively impacted. They read the outcome of the Referendum as implying that as a nation, we are 'less welcoming to visitors from other countries', and notably remarked that they would not recommend to their peers back home to come and study in the UK.
- 1.8 We must preserve as best we can the opportunities for EU and international students who may look to come to the UK in the future, some of whom may have anxieties as a result of the coverage of the treatment international students in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. So it is vital that the message is strongly communicated that the UK will remain a welcoming place for international students, of whatever nationality.

2. What protections should be in place for existing EU students and staff?

- 2.1 There is understandable anxiety about the longer term ramifications of the referendum amongst the 125,000 EU students currently studying at UK universities and the 43,000 academic staff and researchers from other EU countries that work here. An initial priority is to reassure EU students and staff that their enormous contribution to our universities and our country is highly valued and that the UK will remain a welcoming place for both them and their families/dependants.
- 2.2 Non-UK students make a very important academic and cultural contribution to university life at UEA, creating an international, outward-looking culture on campus which, in turn, benefits our UK students both in their studies but also in the richness of the wider student experience.
- 2.3 In turn, UEA's students benefit from us being able to offer a highly skilled workforce, drawn nationally and internationally. Around 10% of UEA staff as a whole – and around 13% of research staff – are non-UK EU nationals. Any future shortfall in quality academic staff will damage the reputation and competitiveness of UK Higher Education as well as individual universities, and ultimately affect our students' experience.

- 2.4 The Government should aim to provide assurance, as quickly as possible, that current staff and students from EU countries can continue to work and study at UK universities in the long term without interruption, and that any future changes to their immigration status will not apply to them. The ideal would be to guarantee their residence and working status.

3. *The future of the Erasmus+ programme following the withdrawal of the UK from the EU - Risks and opportunities for UK students*

- 3.1 The Erasmus exchange programme - one of the most well-known schemes to foster mobility between European universities - is the single largest source of funding for UK students wishing to work or study abroad.

- 3.2 Developing a global educational experience is increasingly important for our students in an increasingly international world, and UEA currently has Erasmus agreements with over 75 partner institutions in 22 countries across the EU, which support more than 160 different mobility programmes. In the last academic year 2015/16, UEA hosted a total of 138 Erasmus exchange students from other EU countries.

It is vital that the opportunities for our own students to study or work abroad for part of their course are retained. Mobility enhances students' experience, deepens their learning possibilities, strengthens their independent thinking, fosters entrepreneurship and boosts employability. All of these qualities are needed for students to become the global leaders of tomorrow. Indeed, UK students who have undertaken an Erasmus placement are 50% less likely to experience long-term unemployment (*Source: Erasmus Impact Study, published by the European Commission in 2014.*)

- 3.3 The potential downside risks, in terms of mobility, arising from the UK leaving the EU are:

- Competition for UK students, from universities elsewhere in the world, intensifies if international study-abroad opportunities offered by UK universities suffer;
- More UK students choose to study their degree abroad, particularly if other EU countries engage in targeted marketing and recruitment activity;
- Employability of graduates from the UK declines (if access to the Erasmus exchange programme is lost).

- 3.4 Because the availability of Erasmus exchange programmes can be wrapped up in students' longer term decisions about where to study for an undergraduate degree, particularly as year three of a four year degree course is often the one spent abroad, the British Government should guarantee funding for UK students in the Erasmus exchange programme through to 2020, as soon as possible. Otherwise, we risk a greater number of UK students opting to study their entire undergraduate degree abroad.

- 3.5 Ideally, the UK HE sector should continue to be part of the Erasmus programme. If this is not secured, then UK HEIs will have to begin to build whole new student exchange relationships outside of the Erasmus programme.

4. *How changes to freedom of movement rules may affect students and academics in English higher education institutions;*

- 4.1 UEA works locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The teaching that we provide, the research that we undertake and the partnerships that we forge, do not stop at the borders of the UK or the EU. UEA has ambitious plans for internationalisation - expanding the reach of our graduates and researchers and bringing high quality students from across the world to Norwich. So freedom of movement will very much remain key to us achieving these aims.

- 4.2 Collaboration across borders is absolutely crucial to generating world-class research, as truly outstanding research tends to be done by people working internationally. Multiple perspectives, complementary expertise and diverse approaches to problem-solving are all vital ingredients in confronting the complex, inter-disciplinary and global challenges faced by society. For UEA, such globally relevant challenges include climate change; food and

nutrition; antibiotic resistance; sustainable agriculture; the healthcare needs of ageing populations; water security; energy efficiency; and low carbon societies. Postgraduate research students are vital to the success of these endeavours, particularly in scientific and health laboratory environments.

- 4.3 Staff mobility is also important for personal and career development; to learn from others; to share best practice; to develop the longer term strategic international partnerships that may subsequently lead to new student exchange programmes; for joint curriculum development and delivery; and for providing a platform for future research collaborations.
- 4.4 Any limits to freedom of movement will reduce the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for EU students and academics in what is an increasingly competitive international market for recruiting students and staff.

5. *How to ensure UK universities remain competitive after the withdrawal of the UK from the EU*

- 5.1 For staff, first, protect the freedom of movement for EU27 citizens to UK, ideally. If not that, then as light-touch work-visa regime as is possible for EU27 employees of UK universities.
- 5.2 For students, the student loan status of EU27 students, post-Brexit, would have to be part of the Brexit negotiations. As little change as possible from the current regime would be the best outcome for the UK sector. Any changes that place obstacles or barriers to the recruitment for EU students would mean an undermining of the UK sector's competitive position.
- 5.3 A further threat to competitiveness is the increasing perception among non-EU students and academic staff that the UK is less welcoming to foreigners. There would need to be a significant promotional campaign to address this perception.

6. *What the Government's priorities should be during negotiations for the UK to exit the EU with regard to students and staff at higher education institutions?*

- 6.1 The top priority should be free movement of academic staff. Second, should be the free movement of students from EU27 countries who are registered at UK universities. Third, should be UK universities' future access to research programmes and networks (particularly Horizon 2020, as we would prefer not to operate under a different regulatory environment to the rest of Europe). Fourth, should be UK students' access to the Erasmus student exchange programme. Fifth, should be continued UK access to European Investment Bank funding.

7. *What steps the Government should take to mitigate any possible risks and take advantage of any opportunities?*

- 7.1 Most of the risks have been addressed in previous questions, although on Horizon 2020 there is regulatory risk if we were to be excluded. There has been a move towards major simplification of research funding at the EU level in the last two years. Horizon 2020 has reduced red tape by providing a single research framework across all EU Member States, and the range of 'Associated Countries', such as Norway. By providing a single, consistent framework for collaboration, the EU has reduced much of the bureaucracy associated with bringing together researchers from different countries, all of which have their own rules and regulations. If the UK stands on the sidelines of that, with separate/additional layers of regulation, it could be very complex and very costly.
- 7.2 Generally, it will be important to put in place some kind of transitional period if access is to be discontinued. 'Cliff edge' change in 2019 would be highly damaging. The damage from any disadvantaging of UK universities as a result of the failure of a negotiated Brexit to deliver the priorities listed above would be eased if changes were introduced over a transition period.