

Science priorities for Brexit

A statement by Stephen Metcalfe MP
Chair of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee,
informed by advice and evidence from the research
and innovation community



“The strength of UK research and innovation can be maintained and grown with the right mix of skilled people, investment, networks and collaboration, and regulation and trade.”

Science priorities for Brexit

It is widely recognised that scientific research is an international endeavour and Britain is a hub of research and innovation with the infrastructure and regulatory environment that attracts investment and supports a diverse mix of entrepreneurs and researchers from at home and abroad.

This ecosystem drives excellent research and innovation at our leading universities; world-class businesses and globally admired institutes, enabling UK-based researchers and innovators to work with the best organisations and facilities, wherever they are in the world.

It also underpins our prosperity, gives all UK citizens access to the best, innovative services and the opportunity to be part of a highly skilled workforce with rewarding, productive jobs that contribute to a culturally diverse nation and support our global ambitions.

UK research and innovation allows us to compete on the global stage as an outward-looking nation that works with others around the world to tackle global challenges such as climate change and antimicrobial resistance and develop technologies and products that improve people’s lives around the globe.

The strength of UK research and innovation can be maintained and grown with the right mix of skilled people, investment, networks and collaboration, and regulation and trade.



This statement was informed by advice and evidence from the research and innovation community provided to Stephen Metcalfe MP, Chair of the Commons Science and Technology Committee and the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee. Those organisations engaged

with are listed at the back of this document. This statement does not represent a formal policy position of these organisations. Download the evidence report summarizing some of the advice and evidence received at scienceinparliament.org.uk

People

It is in the UK's national interest to attract diverse individuals from around the world with strategically valuable skills as well as give every one of its citizens the opportunity to develop the skills that the UK needs. Individuals with strategically valuable skills to the UK include successful leaders in research fields, early-stage researchers, technologists, technicians and those with entrepreneurial and management skills.

Immediate Actions required

- Provide certainty and stability for researchers and innovators that are EEA nationals currently working in the UK.
- Fill evidence gaps about the mobility of those with strategically valuable skills to the UK to inform future immigration policy.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy that champions Britain as a hub of research and innovation that welcomes a diverse mix of entrepreneurs and researchers from at home and abroad.

Brexit negotiation priorities

- Provide certainty and stability for researchers and innovators that are EEA nationals currently working in the UK.
- Ensure that UK-based researchers can work elsewhere, recognising that the UK benefits from its citizens being able to work elsewhere to develop their expertise and networks, many of whom choose to bring these back to the UK.

UK domestic policy requirements

- Ensure that the Industrial Strategy takes steps to equip people with the skills that they will need to succeed in the workforce of the future.
- Encourage wider uptake of science and mathematics at all stages of education, giving people opportunities to learn new skills throughout their lives.
- Develop an immigration system grounded on the evidence that ensures that UK universities and businesses continue to thrive and can recruit and retain people with the skills that they need, wherever they are from.
- Expand the UK's world-class funding streams to help attract and retain the most talented UK and international researchers to UK research.

Investment in research and innovation

Signal the UK's intention to compete internationally by investing in scientific research and innovation and creating an attractive environment for other investors.

Immediate Actions required

- Ensure that there is no decline in overall public funding for UK science and innovation across all disciplines.

Brexit negotiation priorities

- Continue UK participation in Horizon 2020 to the end of the programme.
- Communicate the role of the UK and its status in any EU programmes to partners across the EU and internationally
- Seek the closest possible association for the UK with EU research and innovation programmes that support excellence, ensuring that we have both access to and influence over their development.

UK domestic policy requirements

- Set a target of 3% of GDP for combined public and private R&D investment. Support this by investing at least 0.7% of GDP into research and development, and taking steps to encourage greater private and charitable investment.
- Identify opportunities to develop and host strategically valuable international research facilities in the UK.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of all current public funding for UK research and development and conduct contingency planning to ensure that there is no gap, or hiatus, in public funding for people and projects as the UK leaves the EU.
- Ensure that the Industrial Strategy boosts entrepreneurial activity both regionally and nationally.

Collaboration and networks

To realise the UK's ambition to remain one of the best places in the world to do research, to innovate and grow business, UK-based researchers must be able to engage with the brightest minds, the best organisations and facilities, wherever they are in the world.

Immediate Actions required

- Champion the UK's ambition to remain a world-class scientific collaborator and innovation partner when engaging with countries around the world.

Brexit negotiation priorities

- Maintain access for UK and EEA researchers to a full range of world-class research facilities, both in the UK and internationally.
- Secure access to international networks and collaborations that support international mobility and collaboration.

UK domestic policy requirements

- Develop an international strategy setting out the UK's ambition to remain a world-class scientific and innovative collaborator.
- Provide funding and infrastructure to create new bilateral and multilateral partnerships that enable UK-based researchers and innovators to work with the best people in the world, wherever they are based.
- Continue to make an authoritative contribution to international research strategy and policy development through the UK's membership and participation in international fora.
- Continue to collaborate internationally on global challenges such as climate change and antimicrobial resistance.

Regulation and trade

UK regulation should continue to support cutting-edge science and trade, while keeping people and the environment safe and earning public confidence

Immediate Actions required

- Appoint scientific advisers to all UK government departments, including the Department for Exiting the European Union, and draw on research expertise throughout the process of the UK leaving the EU.

Brexit negotiation priorities

- Maintain a close relationship with international regulators and agencies that enable researchers to collaborate and UK markets to operate across borders.
- Ensure that there is no 'legislative limbo' where pending EU regulations that are not currently on the statute in the UK are lost as the UK leaves the EU.

UK domestic policy requirements

- Optimise the UK's current regulatory processes to ensure that these support cutting-edge science and trade while keeping people and the environment safe and earning public confidence.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the current regulatory environment, working with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments as appropriate. This should identify areas of regulation where alignment with EU rules is important for the UK's competitiveness, avoiding increased costs for UK business that would make the UK a less attractive trading partner, while also exploring where developing new regulatory approaches could enable the UK to take a leading position in the development and commercialisation of new products.
- Where the UK aligns with international regulation, UK experts must remain fully engaged in the development of standards and regulation.
- Where the UK diverges from international regulations, this must not prejudice engagement in international research collaborations, or place the UK at a competitive disadvantage.

**List of organisations engaged
with for the development of
this statement:**

Academy of Medical Sciences
Association of Medical Research Charities
BMA
British Academy
Campaign for Science and Engineering
Campaign for Social Science
Cancer Research UK
CBI
Council of Mathematical Sciences
NFU
Innovate UK
Institute of Physics
Learned Society of Wales
Royal College of Nursing
Royal Academy of Engineering
Royal Society of Biology
Royal Society of Chemistry
Royal Society
Royal Society of Edinburgh
Russell Group
Science is Vital
Scientists for EU
TechUK
UK BioIndustry Association
Universities UK
University Alliance
Wellcome