

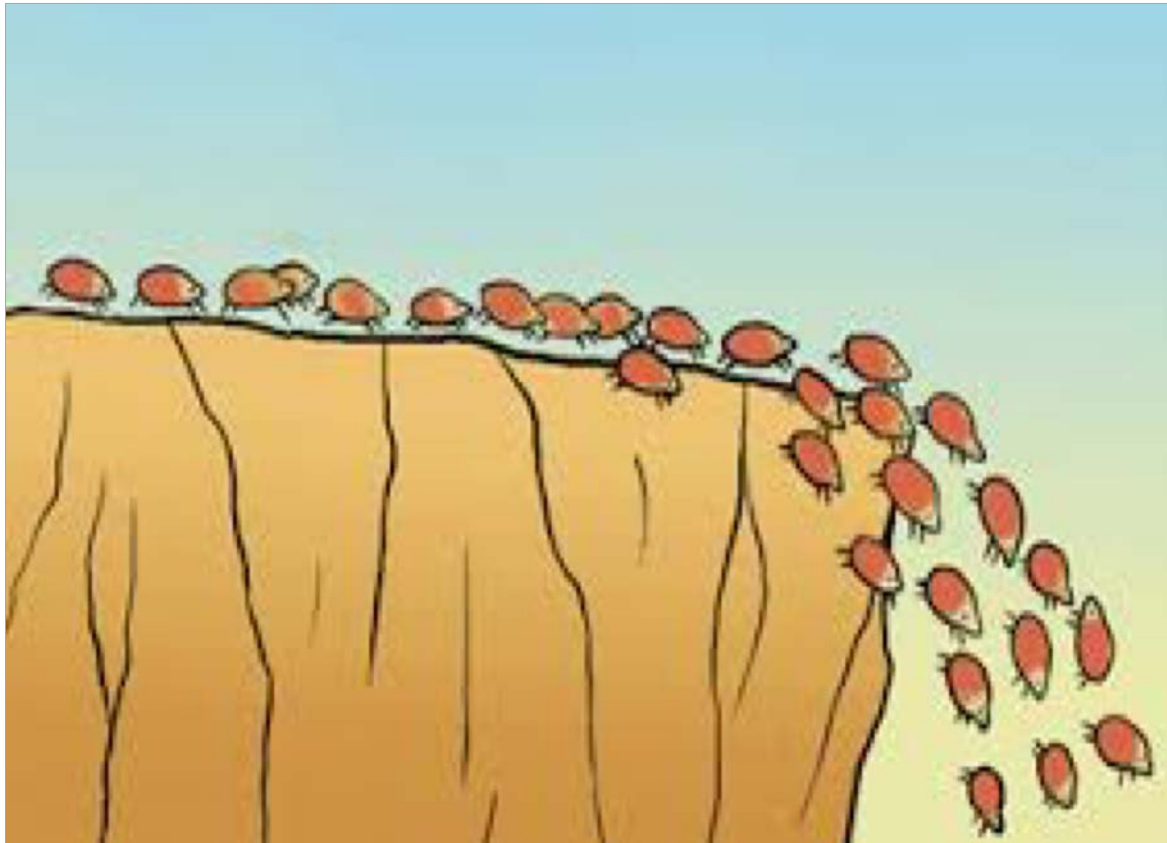
Brexit and higher education: UK universities on the brink

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Conference of scholarship holders from Germany
Imperial College London, 9 November

1. Why the June 2016 referendum result?
2. Why was nothing done to reverse it?



EUROPE

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Continent.

Vote

YES





Brexit and educational level, June 2016

	LEAVE	REMAIN
Total (same for men and women)	52	48
EXIT POLLS		
18-24 years	27	73
Higher degree	36	64
First degree	43	57
Secondary education	64	36
Primary education	72	28
KINGS COLLEGE LONDON STUDY		
Degree holders	26	74
No qualifications	78	22

Inter-dependent EU and UK higher education: The main items

- Revenues
 - Horizon Europe and other research programmes
 - European Regional Development Fund
 - Loans from European Investment Bank
 - Incoming EU student fees
 - *Non-EU student fees—the financial balancing item*
- People
 - Contribution of EU doctoral students to UK research
 - EU-citizen staff in UK HEIs
 - Future staff recruitment out of EU countries
- Education
 - Incoming Erasmus students
 - Outgoing Erasmus students

Non-UK EU academic staff, 2015-16

University	Number of non-UK EU academic staff FPE	Proportion of all academic staff %
University College London	2485	20.3
U Oxford	2335	17.9
Imperial	2035	24.7
U Cambridge	1800	16.3
King's College London	1650	21.7
U Edinburgh	1535	15.4
U Manchester	1140	10.8
LSE	935	26.3
U Glasgow	935	12.9
Queen Mary	835	19.6

Source: HESA

EU students in postgraduate research

- Because UK universities have been open to talent from all over the world and pick the best people, non-UK student numbers and ratios are exceptionally high at postgraduate research level. Non-UK EU nationals are 13.3 per cent of postgraduate research students, non-EU international students are 28.8 per cent (2016-17 data)
- Out of a total of 14,985 non-UK EU postgraduate research students, 64.2 per cent are enrolled at Russell Group universities
- Ratios of non-UK EU students vary, depending on the subject area, the mission and the profile of a HEI. Between them, non-UK students account for 51.5 per cent of the 34,685 postgraduate research students in physical sciences STEM, including 51.9 per cent in mathematics, 58.2 per cent in computer science, and 59.1 per cent in engineering. In Mathematics 22.1 per cent of postgraduate research students are non-UK EU students, while another 29.8 per cent are non-UK, non-EU students

Universities with high dependence on EU doctoral students, 2016-17

University	PGR students	EU PGR students	Non-EU PGR students	EU PGR students %	Non-EU PGR %
Cambridge	5305	1085	1730	20.5%	32.6%
Oxford	5080	1045	1740	20.6%	34.3%
UCL	5715	900	1395	15.7%	24.4%
Imperial	4140	855	1245	20.7%	30.1%
Edinburgh	3370	715	1090	21.2%	32.3%
Manchester	3625	445	1300	12.3%	35.9%
Nottingham	2945	410	965	13.9%	32.8%
Sheffield	2585	325	945	12.6%	36.6%
Southampton	2460	325	805	13.2%	32.7%
Birmingham	2635	320	725	12.1%	27.5%

Note: At LSE the 145 EU research students constitute 29.3% of all research students

Postgraduate non-UK EU students 2016-17

field	number	% of all
Physical sciences	2205	17.3%
Mathematics	645	22.1%
Computer sciences	775	15.9%
Engineering/Tech	2210	15.6%
Architecture/Build	225	11.5%
Medicine/Dentistry	910	10.7%
Medicine allied	935	11.2%
Biological sciences	1965	12.9%
Veterinary sciences	45	14.8%
Agricultural sciences	95	10.7%
SCIENCES	10,015	14.3%

field	number	% of all
Social studies	1365	15.1%
Law	310	13.8%
Business and related	725	10.9%
Mass communications	120	10.0%
Languages	775	13.6%
History/Philosophy	830	11.2%
Creative Arts/Design	455	11.1%
Education	390	6.3%
Combined studies	0	0.0%
NON-SCIENCES	4970	11.7%

ALL FIELDS 14,985 13.3%

Our research questions

1. What are the perceived implications of Brexit for UK higher education institutions (HEIs) as their executive leaders and other operational personnel see it?
2. What are the organisational capabilities of UK HEIs to monitor their environment and to judge, strategize, respond, initiate and make changes, in relation to Brexit?
3. How are these factors differentiated by HEI? What does this mean for higher education system design?

Project personnel: Simon Marginson, William Locke and Ludovic Highman (UCL Institute of Education), Vassiliki Papatsiba (University of Sheffield)



ESRC research project activities

- Nested case studies (interviews, documents) in twelve UK universities in the four UK nations:
 - *Russell Group in England*: UCL, Manchester, Durham, Exeter
 - *Also research elite, in Scotland*: St Andrews
 - *Other comprehensive universities in England*: Sheffield Hallam, Coventry, Keele
 - *In the other nations*: South Wales, Belfast, Aberdeen
 - *Specialist institutions*: SOAS
- Public data on Brexit/UK higher education

Differential effects

- Not all universities are equally affected by Brexit, or are affected in the same ways. Even within membership groups such as the Russell Group, MillionPlus, or University Alliance, each has a distinctive mission and activities, based on the disciplinary mix, research capacity and intensity, wealth, size, location, selectivity, target audience, regional, national and/or international engagement. Some universities are in global cities, others have a narrowly defined regional intake. Some are multi-billion institutions that can cushion a sudden hit. For example Imperial College is a research oriented, science institution; the Open University focuses on teaching and excels in distance learning; South Wales services a poor region.
- The differences are crucial in terms of ability to win substantial EU research funding now or to replace it later, to attract EU and also non-UK EU students, or secure European structural funds based on the characteristics of the region. The mix of characteristics also affects vulnerability to a hard Brexit.

Research findings 1. Brexit as uncertainty

- ‘We don’t really know what is going to happen and it changes from week to week, I don't think the Government knows’ (Russell Group prof science)
- ‘Volatility is alright but uncertainty is difficult... you can’t put firm plans in place... There are more variables in play now than there have been for a long time’ (Russell Group finance executive)
- ‘I’m not aware of anything beyond a firm realisation that we absolutely depend on funding from European sources’ (Russell Group prof science)
- ‘In the event of a disruptive exercise there will be a slow rebuild’ (Russell Group executive)
- ‘We could be into the next government cycle before the impact really becomes visible’ (Post-1992 executive)
- ‘No-one understands what’s happening’ (Post-1992 student leader)

Findings 2. Brexit as feelings

- ‘I see this as a huge problem, so it’s a huge threat’ (Russell Group executive)
- ... ‘the whole consequential impact on overseas students and the mood music it sets’ (Russell Group finance executive)
- ‘EU staff are sort of angry or, you know, why should I stay...’ (Russell Group executive)
- ‘This is one big shooting self in the foot exercise’ (Russell Group executive)
- ‘I think we see ourselves as European first and British second I was working with people who I knew and liked’ (Russell Group prof science)
- ‘I was quite devastated’ (Post-1992 Board of governors)
- ‘it questions your whole value set’ (Post-1992 executive)
- ‘What worries me is that [in Europe] we are not picking up a sense of ”we want to keep the UK as partners at all costs”’ (Post-1992 executive)

Findings 3. Differential positions

- ‘Most universities are reliant on international students to cross fund research and yet you’ve got the government saying, we value research but we don’t value international students ... most research intensive universities... they’re the ones most at risk at the moment’ (Russell Group finance executive)
- ‘We at the top end are being pushed away from coordination roles in projects, whereas the lower end, who are possibly less critical to [European] projects, seem to have lost them altogether’ (Russell Group executive)
- ‘the impact will not be equal across the whole sector’ (Post-1992 executive)
- What happens with the Shared Prosperity Fund is critically important to us’ (Post-1992 executive)
- ‘In Wales you are so much closer to government than you are if you work in a university in England’ (Post-1992 executive)

Findings 4. Brexit as actions

- ‘people want to catch the last wagon before it all disappears’ (Russell group prof science)
- ‘the world’s going to be what the world is, it’s not within our control’ (Russell Group finance executive)
- ‘We’re going to suddenly have to make decisions about EU students, EU postgrads, people on different types of contract, research grants, reapplying for new research grants and all that ... it’s going to be a testing environment’ (Russell Group executive)
- ‘we’re all finding it too hard to think of a strategy [laughs] ... I think you have to recognise that not all of it is in your control and you have to have several strategies ... we are quite agile in working out what we want to do but seeing it through might take longer’ (Post-1992 executive)
- ‘As we start drifting towards the exit days it’s going to become more difficult... a different set of rules’ (Post-1992 executive)

Findings 5. Global repositioning

- ‘Everyone thinks the UK is mad, everyone thinks we’re crazy’ (Russell group prof science)
- ‘Global R&D has shifted to the Far East, so it’s more likely we’ll work with companies from there than in the past’ (Russell group executive)
- ‘maybe I’m a pessimist but ... rather than having a relationship with Germany we sort of have a relationship with Saudi Arabia as our biggest ally...’ (Russell group executive)
- We are developing close bespoke alliances with selected universities in Europe and also beyond Europe (Russell group executive)
- Each faculty is choosing different global relationships (Russell group executive)
- We have no choice but to hedge against uncertainty with new markets [but] ... ‘we ignore at our peril our local community’ (Post-1992 Board of governors)
- ‘Relying on the old Commonwealth countries is an error’ (Post-1992 executive)

International education

- Migration Review Committee report (October 2018), Higher Education Commission Inquiry report (October 2018), All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Students (November 2018)
- £20 billion plus net industry, but UK now number 3 and Canada might push past
- Pathways down 40%. TNE and 'top up' programmes
- China dependence/uncertainty
- What is the national strategy?
- Future fee level for EU students?
- Future of Post-Study Work Visas?
- International doctoral students: the neglected area!

Financial permutations: 5-10 year horizon

	Best case	Middle case	Worst case
Horizon 2020 and other research	No change (major net resource gain)	UK stays in most, but pays in full	Rest of world access only
ERDF, EIB and matching funds	UK government replaces all funds	Selective UK replacement funds	All funding vanishes
EU student revenues	Net gain, enough pay at higher fee	Modest decline affects many	Major reduction in many HEIs
Other international student revenues	Policy/regulation change: growth + !	Slow return to modest growth	Absolute decline, differential effects
EU doctoral students	No change, flow continues as before	Loss of some very bright students	‘Not welcome’: big fall in numbers
EU-citizen academic staff	Broad High Skill Migration pathway	Some loss present & future staff	Sharp fall in EU-citizen numbers
Study abroad by UK students	Erasmus role is maintained	UK government mobility scheme	Sharp fall in outward mobility

Q. How prepared are UK universities?

A. Not very

