

A submission from the British Academy to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee inquiry on Brexit, Science and Innovation: Preparations for 'No Deal'

1. The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences that recognises and supports outstanding research, people and ideas that work to try to shape a better world. In this submission, we focus our response on 'what a no deal Brexit would mean for the science and innovation community'.
2. Leaving the EU without an agreement in place represents an unprecedented challenge to UK research excellence and to the future of the humanities and social sciences. UK membership to the EU has enabled scholarship and research to flourish in long-term stable and interconnected frameworks that support people, collaboration, resources and regulation. In particular, it has allowed UK research to attract an international talent pool through an open labour market, work and compete with the best in the EU, benefit from a single regulatory framework and access funding through models of funding not available in the UK.¹
3. The ease of movement of UK and other EU students, staff and researchers to travel, work and study anywhere in the EU has constituted a comparative advantage for the UK's higher education and research community. Mobility is fundamental to the health of the humanities and social sciences in the UK, as well as to the UK's prosperity more generally, since these disciplines contribute significantly to an economy that is more than three-quarters services- and craft-oriented. In a scenario where there is no agreement on the UK's withdrawal from the EU, these opportunities would be put at risk with negative consequences for the humanities and social sciences. The humanities and social sciences draw extensively on non-UK EU citizens, with six of the top ten disciplines with the highest proportion found in these disciplines: economics & econometrics (36.39%), modern languages (34.93%), classics (26.3%), politics & international studies (25.42%), area studies (24.7%), and anthropology & development studies (23.19%). These are disciplines where deep understanding of European languages, cultures, and societies are crucial.² Leaving the EU without a deal would create considerable uncertainty for non-UK EU nationals based in the UK and their dependants, as well as UK nationals elsewhere in the EU.
4. The humanities and social sciences fare particularly strongly in attracting students, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, from other EU Member States. Seven of the top 10 disciplines with the highest proportions of non-UK EU FTE undergraduate levels are in the humanities and social sciences. These disciplines are: politics & international studies (11.69%), modern languages (10.62%), anthropology & development studies (9.73%), area studies (9.2%), economics & econometrics (9%), business and management studies (7.85%) and architecture, built environment and planning (6.96%). Six of the top ten disciplines with the highest proportions of non-UK EU FTE postgraduate students are in the humanities and social sciences, including classics (21.09%), politics & international studies (19%), and modern languages (18.86%).³

¹ British Academy, *Brexit means? The British Academy's Priorities for the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Current Negotiations*, November 2017, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/europe-brexit-means>

² British Academy, *A submission from the British Academy to the Migration Advisory Committee inquiry on EEA workers in the UK labour market*, November 2017, https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11-27%20Migration%20Advisory%20Committee%20submission%20on%20EEA%20workers_1.pdf

³ British Academy, *A submission from the British Academy to the Migration Advisory Committee inquiry on the impact of international students*, January 2018, https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-01-26%20Migration%20Advisory%20Committee%20submission%20on%20the%20impact%20of%20international%20students_0.pdf

5. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences benefit from EU membership by taking part in symposia, conferences and seminars across Europe, providing a vital contribution to research networking and exchange across all disciplines. Leaving the EU without a deal would hinder the inherently collaborative nature of the humanities and social sciences and restrict access to expertise, networks, institutions, libraries, sites, museums and galleries as well as infrastructures and datasets.⁴ This could not be replaced by UK Government funding. Co-authored research papers with European partners account for 60% of the UK's total research cross-national collaborative activities and increase the UK's overall performance in comparative citation analyses and impact.⁵ Seven of the UK's top 10 collaborative partners are other EU countries.⁶ UK-based humanities and social sciences have also been successful in leading large pan-EU research infrastructures. The European Social Survey (ESS) is a European Research Infrastructure Consortia based at City University of London. The ESS was one of the first European Research Infrastructure Consortia and the only one based in the UK until 2017 when a second (INSTRUCT-ERIC) was established. The location of this pan-EU research infrastructure is a recognition of UK excellence in this field. The ESS is widely considered to be the gold standard for cross-national survey methodology.
6. Additionally, withdrawal from the EU without a deal would restrict the nature and diversity of UK research across all disciplines. EU research funding programmes and mechanisms provide a structure for collaboration, recognition and visibility to UK-based research and researchers. The European Research Council (ERC), which is part of the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, is a world-leading mechanism for frontier research. Its focus on high-risk high-gain research as well as the development of international teams and collaborations at a scale, and in an interdisciplinary format is not replicated and replicable in the UK. It provides opportunities across the career cycle, international prestige and research collaboration outside of the EU. It has allowed the UK to retain and attract world-leading researchers in the humanities and social sciences.⁷
7. From 2007-2015, UK-based researchers in the humanities and social sciences gained €626 million from ERC Grants. UK-based researchers in these disciplines have secured 33.2% of the total funding that was available to them. In 2018, and despite uncertainty about the UK's status post-Brexit, UK-based academics have won 32% of the European Research Council's Consolidator Grants.⁸ The loss of such funding will be damaging to the humanities and social sciences but as importantly the prestige, networks, collaborations and teams it supports would be an irreplaceable loss to the international strength of these disciplines in the UK.
8. The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), which are also part of EU Framework Programmes, provide grants for all stages of researchers' careers and encourage transnational and interdisciplinary mobility. The MSCA enable research-focused organisations to host talented foreign researchers and to create strategic partnerships with leading institutions worldwide. Since the start of Horizon 2020, UK-based researchers in the humanities and

⁴ British Academy, *Europe on the Horizon: Examining the Value of European Research Collaboration*, December 2018, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/europe-futures-horizon-examining-value-research-collaboration>

⁵ UUK, Evidence to Commons Science & Technology Committee inquiry on 'Leaving the EU', December 2016

⁶ British Academy, *Brexit means? The British Academy's Priorities for the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Current Negotiations*, November 2017, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/europe-brexit-means>

⁷ British Academy, *Frontier Knowledge for Future Gain: Why the European Research Council Matters*, May 2018, https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2017-11-27%20Migration%20Advisory%20Committee%20submission%20on%20EEA%20workers_1.pdf

⁸ See: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/news/uk-based-humanities-and-social-science-researchers-scoop-third-prestigious-european-research>

social sciences account for 22.14% of all funding won through this highly competitive and flagship scheme.⁹

9. After the UK's planned withdrawal from the EU there are 11 further ERC calls and 11 MSCA calls to be awarded. These are not calls that Third Countries can receive funding for as Principal Investigators, which would be a significant disadvantage to UK-based researchers considering the success and prestige such awards have brought to the UK.
10. Access to EU Framework Programmes also provides a vital and increasingly important source of funding for researchers. The UK's ability to take part in Horizon 2020 could cease as there would be no legal obligation for the UK to complete any financial settlement upon leaving the EU. As a result, leaving the EU without a deal would significantly weaken UK research and HEIs.¹⁰ The humanities and social sciences are amongst the most successful disciplines in securing EU funding and, as a result, the most at risk of a no deal. Of the top 15 disciplines with the highest amount of funding from EU government bodies as a total of that discipline's funding, 13 are in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Archaeology receives 38% of its research from the EU, more than any other discipline and more than it receives from UK government sources.¹¹
11. Failure to reach a deal on the withdrawal of the UK would also critically weaken the position of the UK government in the negotiations on associating with future Framework Programmes and compromise current collaborative research projects in the humanities and social sciences.¹² UK participants would be treated as established in Third Countries, which would restrict their participation and funding available. Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation has confirmed that eligibility criteria must be "complied with for the entire duration of the grant. This is why it was important to be transparent and inform UK-based applicants now that if the UK withdraws from the EU without concluding a withdrawal agreement they may be required to leave the project and no longer receives funding".¹³ Thus, a no deal could lead to the departure of UK-based researchers, and restrict the ability of the UK to attract researchers, including from outside the EU.
12. The UK's participation to Erasmus+ is also at risk in a no-deal scenario. While the UK government's underwrite guarantee will cover the payment of awards to UK applications for all successful Erasmus+ bids submitted before the UK's departure from the EU, the UK Government will need to reach agreement with the EU for UK organisations to continue participating in Erasmus+ projects.¹⁴ Erasmus+ is key for UK students and contributes to enhancing employment prospects as well as language, interpersonal and cultural awareness skills, which is vital to the UK economy and society. The benefits are not restricted to individual

⁹ British Academy, *Brexit means? The British Academy's Priorities for the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Current Negotiations*, November 2017, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/europe-brexit-means>

¹⁰ UUK, A 'No Deal' Brexit: Implications for Universities and Minimising Risk, December 2018, <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/brexit/Documents/no-deal-brexit-implications-for-universities-and-minimising-risk.pdf#page=5>

¹¹ British Academy, *Brexit means? The British Academy's Priorities for the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Current Negotiations*, November 2017, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/europe-brexit-means>

¹² British Academy, *Association with European Union Framework Programmes for Research & Innovation: Challenges and Opportunities*, December 2018, <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/europe-futures-association-european-union-framework-research-innovation>

¹³ Holyrood, *Brexit 'no deal' will rip up university research funding*, warns European Commission, October 2017, <https://www.holyrood.com/articles/news/brexit-%E2%80%98no-deal%E2%80%99-will-rip-university-research-funding-warns-european-commission>

¹⁴ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/erasmus-in-the-uk-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/erasmus-in-the-uk-if-theres-no-brexit-deal>

participations. Returning UK students do so with enhanced networks, which are essential to UK research excellence. The programme is also key to attracting language assistants who are critical to the advancement of language and cultural awareness skills in the UK.

13. Visiting students provide also an invaluable economic contribution across UK regions.¹⁵ Many non-UK EU students who come to the UK do so through Erasmus+. The programme is essential to increasing UK research networks and attracting researchers. UK students benefit from interacting with non-UK EU students, with UK students having reported that they have a better world view and an enhanced awareness of cultural sensitivities as a result of the interaction. Non-UK EU students also bring specific skills (e.g. language and cultural knowledge) invaluable to UK businesses and strengthen their capacity to export goods and services.¹⁶
14. No deal for the humanities and social sciences in the UK would cause an unprecedented challenge and significant disruption, including to the contribution the humanities and social sciences make to the UK's economy and society. It will severely impact the mobility and collaborations of UK and EU students, staff and researchers and is likely to lead to the loss of researchers from the UK. It will stop also our ability to gain funding from the ERC and MSCA where the humanities and social sciences in the UK lead the field, bringing the UK world-leading prestige and excellence.

¹⁵ HEPI, The costs and benefits of international students by parliamentary constituency, January 2018, <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Economic-benefits-of-international-students-by-constituency-Final-11-01-2018.pdf>

¹⁶ British Academy, *A submission from the British Academy to the Migration Advisory Committee inquiry on the impact of international students*, January 2018, https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-01-26%20Migration%20Advisory%20Committee%20submission%20on%20the%20impact%20of%20international%20students_0.pdf