Universities UK update October 2016

- **EU student fees and financial support for 2017/18 entrants**

UUK issued a **public statement** welcoming an announcement from the Department for Education that confirmed EU students applying for university places in England in 2017/18 will continue to be eligible for student loans and grants, and entitled to home fee status for the duration of their course, even past the point that the UK leaves the EU.

- **Treasury guarantee for structural and investment fund projects**

The Chancellor recently **announced** an extension to the government guarantee for funding for EU structural and investment fund (ESIF) projects, to include all projects signed before the UK leaves the EU, and which continue after Brexit. The **previous** guarantee was provided only for projects signed before this year’s Autumn Statement on 23 November, so the extension provides some much-needed certainty for those universities currently engaged in the development of ERDF or ESF projects.

The statement from the Chancellor confirms that funding for projects signed after the Autumn Statement will be honoured by the government, provided they are (a) good value for money, and (b) in line with domestic strategic priorities. UUK are seeking additional clarification from the Managing Authorities responsible for ESIF in England on the specifics of these conditions. The announcement also states that, where the devolved administrations sign up to structural and investment fund projects under their current EU budget allocation prior to Brexit, the government will ‘ensure they are funded to meet these commitments’.

- **EU student recruitment fairs**

UUK are keen to push out some positive messaging to potential EU students during this recruitment cycle. They are working closely with the British Council to engage with students, recruitment agents and media in key European markets by organising activities around British Council student fairs. Activities include panel debates, events for students/media/agents, sharing a short film, social media and providing messaging and collateral.

- **Roundtables with parliamentarians**

UUK hosted two roundtable discussions with parliamentarians in Westminster to discuss exit negotiation priorities and domestic policy development to address the implications of Brexit. They shared latest UUK thinking on what support universities need to thrive post-exit and asked parliamentarians for their advice and support in making our case. UUK are now following up with more detailed briefings to many of the 30+ MPs and Lords who attended these events.

- **House of Commons Education Select Committee inquiry into the impact of Brexit on higher education**

At the end of September, the Education Committee launched its **inquiry** into the impact of Brexit on higher education. UUK are in close contact with the Committee Chair, Neil Carmichael MP, who has specifically said that evidence for this inquiry ought to come from university leaders, academics and students among others. UUK will be submitting written evidence ahead of the 11 November deadline and universities will also be making their own submissions.
- Mutual recognition of professional qualifications (MRPQ)

UUK are working with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to inform their evidence base around mutual recognition of professional qualifications (MRPQ) and its significance to universities.

- Joint letter with NUS

The Guardian recently published a letter signed by Dame Julia Goodfellow, President, Universities UK and Malia Bouattia, President, National Union of Students, highlighting the openness, diversity and global outlook of UK universities (regardless of Brexit) and the value of overseas students and staff.