



**House of Lords EU Select Committee: Brexit: Deal or No Deal
GuildHE's Written Response to the Call for Evidence**

25 October 2017

GuildHE

1. *[GuildHE](#) is an officially recognised representative body for UK Higher Education. Our members include universities, university colleges, further education colleges and specialist institutions from both the traditional and private (“for profit” and “not for profit”) sectors. Member institutions include some major providers in professional subject areas including art, design and media, music and the performing arts; agriculture and food; education; maritime; health and sports.*

Opening comment

2. UK higher education is amongst the best in world, delivering world-class research and teaching. Our reputation is based, in no small part on the excellence of the staff working in our universities – many of which come from overseas. Furthermore, that the day-to-day operations of UK HEIs are reliant upon international technical staff.
3. In particular, we have a number of concerns around tightening restrictions around academics and other staff entering the UK should the UK exit the EU without a deal or transition period in place.

What potential stumbling-blocks remain? Under what scenarios might the outcome of the negotiations be ‘no deal’?

4. Whilst we recognise recent assurances made to EU Citizens living in the UK that they will have a right to remain post Brexit, we would view failure to resolve issues surrounding Citizens Rights to be a major stumbling-block.
5. Looking through the [Joint technical notes on the comparison of EU-UK positions on citizens' rights](#), some limited movement can be seen.
6. The UK and EU have found agreement on roughly 58% of the details around Citizens' Rights. This has increased from the situation in July where there was agreement on around 42% of the details.
7. However, as we get ready to enter the next phase of talks between the EU and UK, this does leave 42% of the details to be agreed. Of particular note, there has been very little movement on the majority of the red flags from July. This includes areas such as the status of future family members post Brexit.
8. All in all, this adds to uncertainty for the valued EU staff members of the higher education community, and is something the Alistair Jarvis at UUK recently [highlighted for The Times](#).

What would be the implications, good and bad, of ‘no deal’?

9. The main implication that we see of “no deal” would be the continuing state of uncertainty - whether for staff, funding or travel arrangements - over the future relationship with the EU.
10. For example, in order to maintain their outstanding global reputation, British universities must also ensure they are attracting the highest quality staff from all over the world. Much of the world-class teaching and research is delivered by international academics. Furthermore, many UK institutions are reliant on a proportion of overseas technical staff to ensure that the operational aspects are fulfilled.
11. In 2014-15, 31,120 non-EU staff were employed in UK universities, making a vital contribution to our world-leading research base. A further 43,015 EU staff were recorded as working in higher education.¹ This is almost 20% of staff in the entire sector – a significant proportion.
12. The quality of teaching and research at universities depends on being able to recruit academics who are specialists in their field, irrespective of nationality. Furthermore, expertise in a specific field takes many years to acquire – it is not possible to up-skill domestic workers simply and quickly.
13. In particular, a tough immigration policy in the event of “no deal” that does not welcome international students and staff to UK universities could put our institutions at risk of not continuing to compete successfully in a global field.

Is a transition arrangement a necessary component of any lasting agreement, and if so, why?

14. We believe that a transition deal is essential for any lasting agreement.
15. Universities, and in particular small and specialist universities, will need time to prepare for the greater burden that Brexit will bring and get the right systems in place.
16. Many smaller institutions already have limited capacity to support visiting staff and students to gain visas or for UK staff to travel overseas (an essential requirement needed for an academic to become a world-recognised thought leader).

What will be the key components of a transition arrangement?

17. A transition arrangement with **clear guidance for the future relationship** will give institutions much-needed time to implement new systems and procedures.
18. We identify the following points as crucial components for UK HE to continue to thrive and contribute to the UK’s economy during a transition period:
 - a. Guaranteeing full residency rights of non-UK EU staff and students in the UK, and that of UK staff and students based elsewhere in the EU during a transition period
 - b. Ensuring that UK academics are able to collaborate with researchers across the EU and further afield
 - c. Protecting UK HE’s ability to recruit and retain talented students, academics and support staff from around the world
 - d. Securing continued access to EU research and innovation funding streams, such as the Horizon 2020 programme and Framework Programme 9
 - e. Fostering globally aware students through Erasmus+ and other exchange programmes
 - f. Safeguarding ongoing development provided by EU structural funding programmes through continue involvement or by making alternative provisions.

¹ HESA, 2014-15

How will the UK-EU relationship be conducted during the transition period? How long should the transition period last?

19. We believe that the UK-EU relationship should be conducted as if the UK were still a full EU member state for the transition period.
20. The period should last as long as is necessary in order to establish the new, mutually beneficial partnership between the UK and EU.
21. We acknowledge that this may not resolve the tensions that the Brexit vote and 2017 General Election revealed in the UK.
22. However, we believe that there is a role that universities can play in bridging the divide.
23. Universities from right across the higher education ecosystem already play a large role in fostering and developing international communities on their campuses. This, coupled with student and staff opportunities to go abroad (such as Erasmus +), leads to a greater understanding of different races and cultures amongst those who attend university.
24. Universities in areas of little migration are likely to bring greater diversity to their local communities. International students are likely to bring tourism (visiting friends and family), and a positive impact of the economy.
25. More work needs to be done break down barriers that exist within communities and we believe that there is untapped potential to be found within the higher education system, particularly within small and specialist universities which often closely tied in with their local communities. They could act even further as convening powers locally for this work (For existing evidence, please see the [recent HEFCE case studies on Catalyst funding](#)).
26. GuildHE would be willing to act as a conduit to our members for Government and Parliament to carry out such initiatives at regional and local levels.

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