

Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
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Dear Prime Minister,

Graduate Visa Route review – Potential Impact on UK Economic Growth

Your Growth Plan rightly recognises that future prosperity relies on the UK becoming an even better and more competitive place for research and innovation. In this endeavour the university sector is one of the UK's greatest strengths, but this strength is at risk.

We choose to invest in the UK because of the talent, skills and innovative ideas that can be found here. Universities in all parts of the UK are key partners to industry, pushing the boundaries of discovery and developing a highly skilled workforce. To maintain global advantage and grow a resilient economy, the government must create an environment in which the university sector can succeed and remain at the cutting edge.

There are early but clear warning signals that this position is at risk. We are deeply concerned by reports of growing research and teaching funding gaps, as well as sharp declines in international student applications as a result of government policy. This not only risks undermining the positive impact that international students have on our skills base, future workforce, and international influence but also reduces the funding that universities have available for their wider activities, including research and collaboration with industry.

Increasing the UK's research and innovation intensity remains key to delivering the growth strategy. The UK needs a positive and ambitious higher education strategy that sets out how government will create the supportive funding and policy framework needed for an even more knowledge-intensive economy. Additionally, we urge you not to make changes to graduate visa routes without a detailed and comprehensive review of the consequences. Over time, financial pressures could undermine one of the UK's greatest strategic strengths with wide ranging implications for businesses, as well as the wider economy and society.

Yours,

- Siemens, Carl Ennis, CEO Siemens plc and Smart Infrastructure, GB&I
- Anglo American, Stuart Chambers, Chairman
- EDF Energy, Paul Spence, Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs
- Severn Trent, Christine Hodgson, Chair
- Thales UK, Paul Gosling, CTO
- Rio Tinto, Dan Walker, Global Head of Innovation, Science and Technology
- Neptune Energy DE, Sam Laidlaw, Chairman (and National Centre for Universities and Business, Chair)



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