

## University of Leeds Staff Survey

### The EU referendum and its impact at the university

In July 2016, an online survey was circulated among all staff at the University of Leeds, in order to garner opinion and analyse the effects that the Brexit vote has had/may have on their research and work going forward. The survey remained open until 31<sup>st</sup> August, and 214 responses were received in total.

#### Key points:

- **60%** of respondents had already applied for EU funding whilst **78%** had recently considered it.
- **58%** of respondents are less likely to apply following the referendum vote.
- Reasons for being less likely to apply included:
  - Believing that UK institutions would be viewed negatively both by potential partners and evaluators
  - The substantial time taken to put together an EU bid could be used to apply for other national/international funding, if there is uncertainty around UK-led proposals being accepted.
  - Concerns over future eligibility of the UK to apply
  - Likelihood of increased difficulty for Early Career Researchers to access EU funds.
- The majority (**77%**) of respondents had not been advised against applying for EU funding and when they had this was mostly from external colleagues.
- Only **3%** of respondents had actually been removed from an EU funding bid however some people commented that initial plans for collaboration had fizzled out since the referendum.
- **62%** of respondents would now consider looking for an academic job outside the UK.
- **General concerns and questions:**
  - *I am very concerned about my eligibility/the eligibility of EU colleagues working here at Leeds and in the UK in general.*

This is an issue that is less clear in the long-term and really depends on how strict the mobility demands set out by the Prime Minister / David Davies turn out to be.

**Universities UK Official Statement:** A cross-government department [statement](#) reiterated that while the UK is a member of the EU there will be no change to the immigration status of current EU staff or students.

UUK was a co-signatory to a [letter](#) calling on the prime minister to make an unequivocal statement that EU migrants currently living in the UK are welcome here, and that any changes would apply only to new migrants.

- *Will UK academics still be eligible to apply for EU-funded fellowships?*

All projects awarded prior to the official departure from the European Union will be honoured either by the European Commission or from the UK Government following the Treasury statement on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

- *Will the UK become an associated country?*

It is too early to say as this will be part of the exit negotiations. It is likely that the UK will need to be a key part of any future excellence-based framework, but at the same time it cannot expect to continue to make a profit from a Framework Programme after deciding to leave the European Union. Commissioner Moedas has recently said that the UK has an important part to play in the development of “FP9” which emphasises that there will be a role for the UK in a successful implementation of research goals in the European Research Area.

- *What will happen if the UK can still participate in Horizon 2020 but restricted movement rules apply?*

The two are intrinsically linked (Switzerland is a recent case study for this). Restrictions on mobility are treated with little tolerance so any participation will be limited if there are mobility restrictions. Marie Curie may not be a viable option by its reliance on mobility and a ‘partial accession’ to parts of H2020 may be applied. With the timeline of exit negotiations, we believe that this will be more of an issue with the next Framework Programme.

Funded projects that will last beyond H2020 should not be affected but details on how this would work will be part of negotiations.

- *Will EU funds be withdrawn from UK institutions?*

Both the Commission and the UK Government have been keen to assure us that this will not be the case. This would have an effect on other EU partner institutions, or non-UK national fellows and would be seen as political spite over practicality. Even ERC grants held in the UK have a potentially global benefit and in all cases, policy and performance boxes on successful implementation of H2020 would not be ticked that could harm development of the next Framework Programme. All projects awarded prior to the official departure from the European Union will be honoured either by the European Commission or from the UK Government following the Treasury statement on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

- *How will the European Commission handle potential evaluator bias?*

The evaluation briefing event given to all evaluators now contains a section at the beginning to highlight that no bias against the UK should be exercised and that Excellence is the basis of a funded project. Furthermore, independent observers are present to ensure that no external factors appear to influence the evaluation process, including Brexit.

- *I am around worried about changes regarding recruitment of Postgraduate students*

This is an issue that is less clear in the long-term and really depends on how strict the mobility demands set out by the Prime Minister / David Davies turn out to be (See UUK statement above)

#### **Universities UK Statement:**

The EU referendum outcome will not lead to any immediate change to the immigration status of current EU students, including those that started courses this autumn (2016–17 academic year). This has been confirmed in a [statement](#) (27 June) from Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities and Science. The longer-term implications for EU students who want to apply to study in the UK will depend on the outcome of negotiations and what kind of relationship the UK agrees with the EU

#### EU students applying for a course starting in 2017–18:

- In England: The Government has [guaranteed](#) that EU students applying to study in England in 2017–18 will continue to be eligible for tuition fee loans for the duration of their study, even if the course finishes after the UK has left the EU.
- In Wales: The Education Secretary has [announced](#) that EU nationals who intend to begin studying in the academic year 2017–18 will also continue to receive financial support.
- We await similar guarantees from the Scottish Government and from Northern Ireland.

#### Existing EU students, including those applying for the 2016–17 academic year:

- Separate statements from across all UK nations confirm that current EU students, and 2016–17 entrants, will be eligible to receive loans and grants to fund their studies for the duration of their courses.
- EU students attending universities in England and Wales who are eligible under current rules to receive loans and grants from the Student Loans Company will continue to do so for the duration of courses they are currently enrolled on, or are about to start this coming year. This has been confirmed by the [Student Loans Company](#) for England, and by [Universities Wales](#) for Wales.

*EU Funding Team  
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