

Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:

Next steps for UK research and innovation policy

Timing: Morning, Monday, 12th October 2026

Taking Place Online



WESTMINSTER
HIGHER EDUCATION
FORUM

Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **The UK research and innovation system - latest developments and key considerations for the future**
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Strategic priorities for research funding and system reform**
implications of Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper proposals / national priorities, UKRI allocations & programme delivery / research funding reform & the longer-term structure of public investment / QR, HEIF & competitive awards / funding adequacy, full economic cost recovery & institutional resilience / future development of research assessment / curiosity-driven, mission-led & strategically directed research / institutional autonomy, research independence & disciplinary breadth / collaboration, specialisation & areas of institutional strength / capability, infrastructure & skills / R&D Missions Accelerator implementation / implications of the UKRI AI Research and Innovation Strategic Framework
Senior representative, university
Senior representative, research
Senior representative, business
Senior representative, investment
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.15 **Supporting high-growth research, innovation and commercialisation**
Professor Charlotte Deane, Executive Chair, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.40 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.45 Break
- 10.55 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.00 **The role of universities in innovation, growth and regional development**
Greg Wade, Head, Innovation, Universities UK
- 11.15 **Supporting regional development through research, innovation and knowledge exchange**
HEIF reform & the LIPF / university, business & government collaboration / knowledge exchange & routes to practical application / research commercialisation / support for spin-outs, start-ups and scale-ups / the role of Innovate UK & implementation of the Growth Catalyst programme / links between public support, private investment & specialist advice / research strengths & capacity across institutions / place-based investment alongside research excellence & national strategic priorities / regional innovation clusters, infrastructure & skills / adoption & wider use of emerging technologies / government response to the SIT Committee's Flying Blind: Innovation, Growth and the Regions report / tracking cluster development, collaboration & local economic impact
Senior representative, university
Senior representative, research
Senior representative, combined authority
Senior representative, spin-out
- 11.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.00 **International collaboration and strengthening the UK research workforce**
experience of UK association to Horizon Europe / preparation for Framework Programme 10 / wider bilateral & multilateral research partnerships / implications of evolving European and international arrangements / Global Talent Taskforce & Global Talent Fund priorities / international mobility, visa arrangements & competitiveness of the UK offer / links between international recruitment & the domestic talent pipeline / doctoral training, fellowships & early-career development / UKRI AI Research and Innovation Strategic Framework workforce commitments / employment conditions, progression & retention / flexible & sustainable career routes / reducing unnecessary administrative demands / Women in Research Charter implementation / diversity, inclusion & representation in senior research leadership
Senior representative, university
Senior representative, research
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.35 **Policy priorities for the UK research and innovation system**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.00 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Higher Education Forum