

Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:

Next steps for UK research and innovation policy

Timing: Morning, Wednesday, 30th April 2025

Taking place online



WESTMINSTER
HIGHER EDUCATION
FORUM

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **'The current state of research and innovation in the UK'**
Professor Graeme Reid, Professor of Science and Research Policy, University College London
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 **UK R&I strategy and priorities moving forward**
key priorities | defining success and measuring performance | accountability | fostering international competitiveness alongside domestic economic growth | assessing priorities for AI investment | implications of sectoral shifts in R&D focus | role of the Regulatory Innovation Office | next steps for UKRI and ARIA under 10-year funding commitments | implications for long-term research planning
Dr Nicola Eckersley-Waites, Manager, Technology and Innovation, CBI
Professor Gerard Parr, Chair, Telecommunications Engineering, University of East Anglia
Dr Liam Sutton, Associate Director, Research and Innovation, University of Bradford
Dr Jay Stone, Associate Director, External Relations and Foresight, Nuffield Council on Bioethics
Professor James Leiper, Director, Research, British Heart Foundation
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.35 **Chair's closing remarks**
Professor Graeme Reid, Professor of Science and Research Policy, University College London
- 10.40 Break
- 10.50 **Chair's opening remarks**
Dr Luke Ridley, Joint Head, Science For Circular Economy, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- 10.55 **Investment in UK R&I and national funding goals**
public-private mix and relationships | options for regulatory and tax reform and priorities for the National Wealth Fund | foreign investment | the future for R&D in the health sector | options for expansion, including AI, energy, and defence | strategies for retaining and scaling innovative ventures in the UK
Matthew Guest, Head of Local and Regional Business Engagement, University of Central Lancashire
Dr Stuart Wilkinson, CEO, Knowledge Exchange UK
Dr Eleanor Hopkins, Deputy Head of Research Policy, The British Academy
Dr Hamish McAlpine, Director, Policy and Engagement, Oxentia
Francesco Mazzagatti, CEO, Viaro Energy; and, CEO, SRM Foundation
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.45 **Key priorities for the higher education sector in enhancing UK R&I**
Dr Mehwaesh Islam, Head, Research Policy, Universities UK
Greg Wade, Head, Innovation Policy, Universities UK
- 12.00 **Developing a joined-up R&I ecosystem**
university funding and research sustainability | challenges posed by financial constraints on universities | impact of rising National Insurance costs | tuition fee adjustments and alternative funding models | strengthening links between HEIs and business | government and business roles in shaping R&I success | optimising policy levers to drive innovation | benchmarking UK policy against international competitors | strategic considerations for attracting and retaining foreign investment
Dr Daniela Rodriguez-Rincon, Research Leader, RAND Europe
Dr Andy Sellars, Director, Strategy, Cornerstone
Professor Chris Molloy, CEO, Medicines Discovery Catapult
Kayleigh Renberg-Fawcett, Senior Programme Manager, Y-PERN, University of Leeds
Dr Julia Hubbard, Innovation and Development Scientific Advisor, Kidney Research UK
- 12.25 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Dr Luke Ridley, Joint Head, Science For Circular Economy, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Elsa Woodworth Jones, Westminster Higher Education Forum