Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:
Next steps for postgraduate research in the UK
Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 26th January 2027
*****Taking Place Online*****

Draft agenda subject to change

8.30 Registration

9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian

9.05 **Postgraduate research in the UK - policy, funding and sector developments**
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor

9.30 **Implementation of UKRI's *New Deal for Postgraduate Research* and the future framework for doctoral training**
delivery of the New Deal in a financially constrained environment | priorities for implementation and sector readiness | enhanced support, supervision and funded doctoral environments | affordability and doctoral capacity | subject breadth and vulnerable disciplines | implications of stipend uplifts, revised entitlements, rising training costs and the London weighting | future funding model for PGR and the full economic cost of doctoral training | cost recovery and reliance on cross-subsidy | implications for self-funded and non-UKRI funded researchers | shared and collaborative training provision | implementation of the UKRI-led Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training across different doctoral environments | recruitment, supervision, researcher development and institutional accountability
Professor Doug Cleaver, Director, Doctoral School, Sheffield Hallam University
Rachel Van Krimpen, Faculty Director, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and People (Science), University of Nottingham
Jonathan Neves, Head, Business Intelligence and Surveys, Advance HE
Dr Nigel Eady, Director, Research Talent, King's College London
Questions and comments from the floor

10.15 **Improving researcher experience, participation and inclusion**
addressing disparities in access, progression and outcomes | widening participation in PGR against a backdrop of continuing financial barriers | postgraduate loans, childcare and hardship support | data and benchmarking on postgraduate access | supporting diverse doctoral pathways, including mature, part-time students and those with caring responsibilities | supervisory capacity, workload, development and recognition | effective practice in doctoral recruitment and training | strengthening wellbeing, belonging and research culture, including disability support | implementation of commitments in the Women in Research Charter by signatories, including family leave beyond UKRI-funded doctoral researchers | improving pathways into R&I careers and transitions into early career posts
Dr Katie Perry, Chief Executive, Daphne Jackson Trust
Dr Sara Spencer, Head, PGR Services, The Open University
Senior representative, students
Questions and comments from the floor

11.00 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian

11.05 Break

11.15 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian

11.20 **International postgraduate research - recruitment, mobility and collaboration**
implications of immigration reform and the International Student Levy for doctoral recruitment and institutional planning | sponsor compliance requirements and support for international researchers | maintaining the UK's attractiveness to international doctoral researchers as study and visa costs rise | the three-year Graduate Route for doctoral graduates and progression from master's study to PhD | priorities for international research collaboration and mobility | Horizon Europe, future participation in its successor programme and wider global partnerships
Senior representative, international education
Senior representative, university
Senior representative, research
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor

12.05 **Postgraduate research, industrial strategy and skills - targeted investment, regional capacity and AI**
positioning doctoral training within industrial strategy and national skills priorities | responding to workforce needs in strategically important technologies and sectors | implications of targeted investment for broad-based doctoral provision and disciplines outside designated priority areas | focal and landscape awards | industry co-funding and placements | co-designed routes under UKRI's AI Research and Innovation Strategic Framework | strengthening regional research capacity and research infrastructure | supervisory capacity at smaller and specialist providers | links between doctoral training, knowledge exchange and commercialisation | pathways into public service careers | use of AI in doctoral research, supervision and assessment, including academic integrity and ethical oversight | implications of AI and emerging technologies for research capability and the future workforce
Carolyn Wynne, Director, Doctoral and Researcher College, Coventry University
Shaun Holmes, Senior Policy Manager, National Centre for Universities and Business
Senior representative, combined authority
Senior representative, industry
Questions and comments from the floor

12.50 **Next steps for postgraduate research and sustainable doctoral capacity in the UK**
Frances Burstow, Director, Talent and Skills, UKRI
Questions and comments from the floor

13.15 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Higher Education Forum