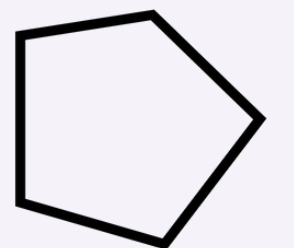


# **A manifesto for higher education in a global city**

**unleashing the potential of London's higher education sector**



LONDON  
HIGHER



# Summary

# 2

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in London are a national asset that powers our global city. To maintain this competitive advantage, the region's university sector requires a sound financial future. With a strong vision from Government, London's diverse institutions will drive forward the UK's global ambitions, deliver innovation-led growth that will benefit not only the capital city but the whole country, and provide the opportunities for talented people from all backgrounds to thrive. Therefore, we ask the Government to:

## 1 **Deliver a vision for long-term success**

provide a better, more joined-up vision for where higher education is headed, so that higher education institutions know what to plan for the long-term.

## 3 **Invest in knowledge and innovation to deliver sustainable growth**

let London's higher education institutions be the solution by harnessing knowledge and skills, leading to economic development through science, technology and research, and ultimately the growth of the UK economy.

## 2 **Maintain our global competitiveness**

create a more positive dialogue around London's world-leading universities and higher education institutions, showcasing them proudly nationally and internationally, including in the press.

## 4 **Nurture talent through opportunity**

universities are engines of opportunity and social mobility and can support the pipeline of talent this country needs to grow and thrive with increased awareness of opportunities and adequate places.

# London is a truly global city, competing on the world stage against the major economies of New York, Tokyo, Paris and Singapore.

Its diverse higher education and research sector is at the core of this success. As a powerful concentration of world-leading institutions, London's higher education sector attracts inward investment and international talent to the benefit of the whole country, whilst also reaching out as beacons across the globe to build partnerships that facilitate trade and innovation.

London's higher education and research sector is one of the country's main engines of growth and opportunity: generating over £12bn in GDP; preparing over half a million students with the skills UK industry needs; and performing world-leading research and innovation to power our economy. It is no coincidence that London is the artificial intelligence (AI) capital of Europe with a total turnover of £17bn and is also known all over the globe for the strength of its creative industries, contributing over half of the UK's total creative industries economic output (£55bn).

The successes of London's higher education sector are widely recognised, including:

- "Best Student City" in the QS world rankings for the fifth consecutive year;
- home to two of the UK's four "Global Top 10" universities;
- home to 17 of the top 20 UK universities for social mobility, including the entire top 10; and
- the highest concentration of student start-ups in the UK, with 38% of student start-ups being founded at London universities.

London's universities enrich their local communities, with a proven track record of strong civic impact. Over and above their roles in education and research, higher education institutions see the value of sharing their knowledge, expertise and resources to support the areas in which they are located. London Higher has collected over 300 case studies on our interactive Civic Map that demonstrate activity across areas such as business growth, sustainability, health and creative.

University campuses are themselves economic hubs that add value to their local areas. Through procurement of goods and services, universities support the supply chains of large and small businesses across the UK. Students are also consumers that support the UK's retail sector, creative sector and night-time economy. For example, UCL alone generated £9.9bn of economic impact across the UK in 2018/19, which is comparable "every year to the trade boost delivered by the 2012 London Olympics".

However, to continue delivering for the nation, higher education in London needs a more stable financial foundation from which the capital's universities can drive forward the UK's global ambitions, deliver innovation-led growth that will benefit the whole country, and provide the opportunities for talented people from all backgrounds to thrive.

**This is why we now ask the Government to...**

**1.**

**Deliver a  
vision for  
long-term  
success**



# Provide a better, more joined-up vision for where higher education is headed so that higher education institutions can plan for the long-term.

**We urge the newly elected Government to:**

- **Establish a roadmap that will deliver a stable financial framework for sustainable higher education** to ensure it can deliver the skilled workforce we need for the UK businesses and essential public services (such as the NHS Workforce Plan). With the per capita cost of providing home undergraduate study outstripping fee income by a larger margin in London than elsewhere, it is time to implement funding allocations that recognise and reflect the real-terms costs faced by institutions in London and other high-cost areas of the country to allow them to sustain their world-leading educational and research credentials and provide the best experience for their students and staff.
- **Work with the sector and regulator to deliver a regulatory framework that is proportionate and minimises the administrative burden on institutions** whilst ensuring high quality teaching that continues to deliver for students across the full diversity of institutions, taking into account differences in size, scale and subject specialisms.
- **Develop an industrial strategy with universities and businesses at its heart**, recognising the synergy and added value of effective academic and business collaboration. This can best be achieved by reuniting the science, business and higher education briefs within a single government department so the two sectors can work together on the national and global challenges through delivering skills, pioneering research and fostering innovation.

**2.**

**Maintain  
London's global  
competitiveness**



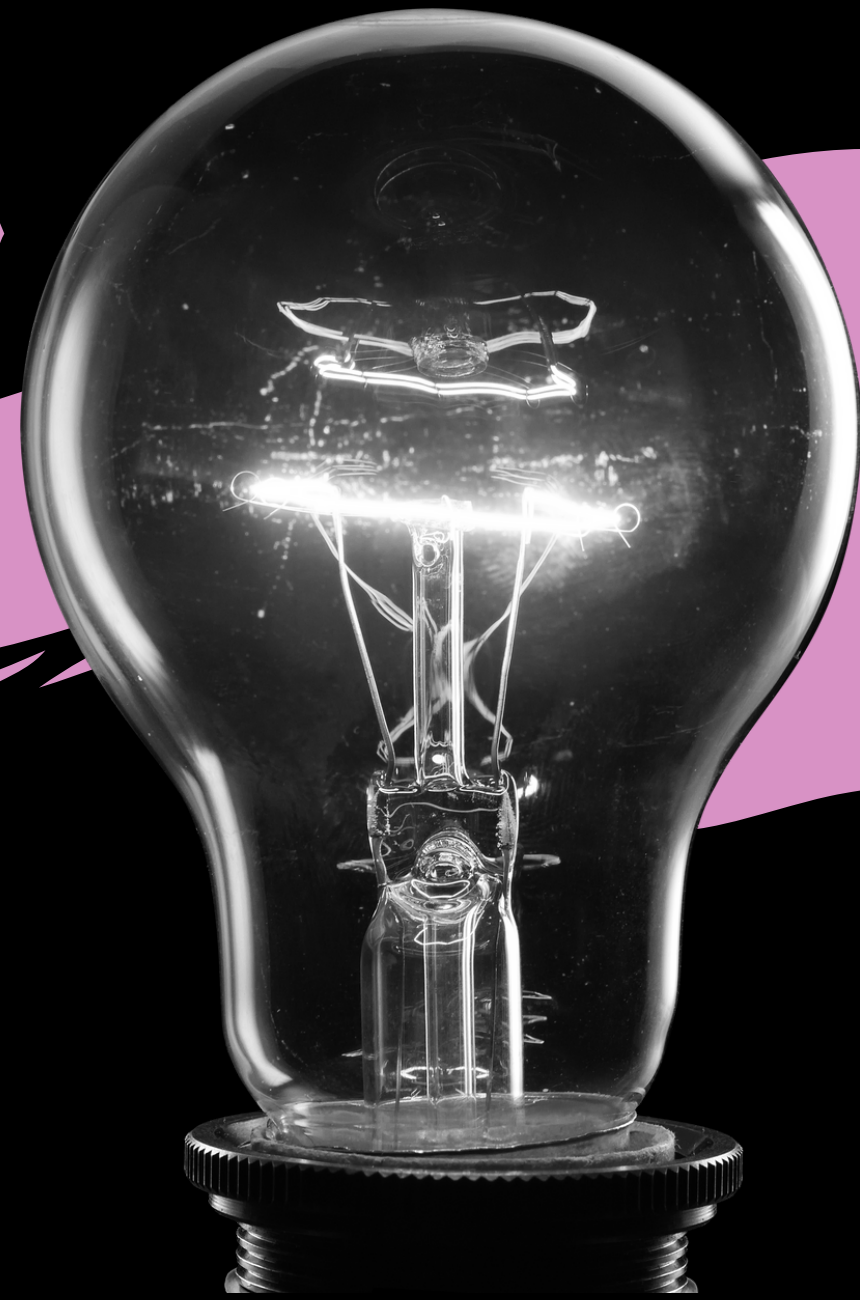
# London is the UK's only truly global city.

London's universities are a magnet for inward investment and enhance international relations, benefitting the whole of the UK. This investment drives economic growth and helps to solve global challenges, as well as reinforcing local industry clusters and creating jobs, leading to higher productivity. London remains the leading destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Europe, attracting 394 FDI projects in 2021, in contrast to 133 in Paris and 140 in Madrid. We ask the Government to:

- **Be a proud champion for higher education in London.** London's universities and higher education institutions can be the solution to the nation's challenges, harnessing knowledge and skills, boosting economic development through science, technology and research, and ultimately growing the UK economy.
- **Attract and welcome international talent to the UK, ensuring the graduate visa route is preserved.** The rhetoric around international students needs to be more positive and recognise publicly the economic and societal benefits they bring to the UK. This summer, London Higher will launch the 'Study London' campaign to showcase the benefits that studying in London can bring to students and build on the UK-wide #WeAreInternational campaign, which will benefit from Government support.
- **Make a long-term commitment to remain in Horizon Europe.** The UK's universities have a proven track record of success in the world's largest international research and innovation programme, with UK education establishments being ranked first for participation among the member countries. Continued membership and certainty will ensure that London, and the wider UK, remain at the heart of cutting-edge research and innovation.

**3.**

**Invest in  
knowledge and  
innovation to  
deliver growth**



# London's universities have much more to give by attracting investment and creating jobs.

By making universities a core pillar of plans to boost the economy, and positioning London's research quality and graduate activity at the centre, we can cement the UK as a world-leader in emerging disciplines, such as renewable energy and AI, and put the UK economy on a stable path for the future.

Universities in London are driving success in high-growth sectors including sustainability, health, creative and tech. London is the UK's most successful region for start-up activity overall and has the highest concentration of student start-ups, with 38% of student start-ups being founded at London universities. We ask the Government to:

- **Strengthen university R&D through implementing long-term funding cycles.** Through greater financial certainty, and targeted reductions in bureaucracy, the government can ensure greater efficiency from the London, and the wider UK's, research base.
- **Support start-ups and spin-outs through a programme that brings together a simplified R&D tax credits system,** easily-accessible growth funds and scale-up support to enable London and the UK to make the most of, and unite, the capital's competitive advantages in world-leading research and entrepreneurial students.
- **Bolster our research capability through championing researcher and technician careers.** Commit to efforts that will diversify the talent pipeline in researchers and technicians that are vital for the UK to maintain its global standing in R&D. Targeted outreach and studentships, mentoring and wellbeing support are some of the measures recommended in our report Diversifying the pipeline.

**4.**

**Nurture  
talent  
through  
opportunity**



# **London's universities and specialist higher education institutions produce over 140,000 skilled graduates every year.**

**London ranks first as the city with the highest educated and skilled population in the world. Students of non-white ethnic backgrounds will make up 74% of those entering higher education in 2030, up from 68% in 2020.**

**The city's universities consistently lead the way in social mobility, delivering unrivalled employment and progression outcomes for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Research by the Sutton Trust has shown that young students from low-income backgrounds are four times more likely to become socially mobile if they attend university. With London's universities making up the entire top ten of Institute for Fiscal Studies' social mobility league table, the capital's higher education sector leads the way in creating opportunity.**

**Yet as the cost of delivering higher education to UK students has increased, the very diversity of higher education provision that is one of London's key strengths finds itself under threat. At the same time, there is unprecedented demand for graduate-level skills. In order, therefore, to meet demand and maintain the diversity of provision that creates choice and opportunity for all, we ask Government to:**

- Honour existing commitments to increase nursing and medical school places, and increase funding for London's world-leading medical schools and healthcare providers.** As the largest regional cluster in the country, London's providers can, with more funding, grow their contribution to the NHS London Term Workforce Plan and help to meet demand.

- **Provide long-term funding for a nationwide, collaborative higher education outreach programme.** To ensure students from all backgrounds are empowered and equipped to access transformational education opportunities, it is vital we pull the Uni Connect programme back from the financial cliff edge and commit to longer-term, sustainable funding. Without it, we risk setting back social mobility in London, and elsewhere, and stifling future economic growth by haemorrhaging the flow of diverse talent into our businesses and public sector services.
- **Maintain student choice in the system and recognise the value that different pathways provide.** This means allowing young people, and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to have the choice of going to university, alongside other options such as vocational and technical education. There is an imperative to ensure that further education, and routes such as BTECs, Degree Apprenticeships, are embedded in a joined-up tertiary education system so pressing skills needs can be address and genuinely transformative opportunities are offered to the next generation of learners.
- **Champion lifelong learning that works.** Work with the sector, business and other experts to develop lifelong learning options that are attractive to learners and providers, and establishes clear pathways for career progression.