

Dear Prime Minister,

### **Maintaining the Graduate Route**

We are writing on behalf of London Higher – the representative body for over 50 universities and higher education institutions in the UK capital – to underscore the importance of maintaining the Graduate Route.

This week the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) found no evidence that the Graduate Route is being abused and recommended the Route is maintained. This is important for the health of our world-leading higher education sector and the local economies around them.

As a region, London is home to 127,000 international students. Many of these students and graduates, live, work and volunteer in London's local communities. Research by Universities UK International shows that the gross economic benefit of international students in London is £9.59 billion, equating to an average net impact in London of £131 million per constituency; that's equivalent to £1,040 per resident. This is almost double the contribution per member of the resident population nationally.

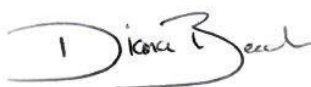
As we come together to grow the economy, these highly skilled students will be essential to address pressing skills shortages across key sectors and industries, including in our schools and NHS. Allowing international students to transition into employment after graduation is an investment that pays dividends for London and the UK regions. We know first-hand from London's employers how much they value the chance to employ and work with a diverse student body and the fresh perspectives and cultural insights international students offer their businesses.

There are many reasons why London continues to hold the title of the World's Best Student City, underpinning the UK's global competitiveness. The opportunity provided by the Graduate Route is one of them. Measures taken in January this year have already succeeded in bringing down legal migration into the UK, with applications to the student visa already down by 44%. There is therefore no need to go any further in this area and risk undermining our 'Global Britain' ambitions and destabilising the finances and vitality of some of our nation's greatest institutions.

It is vital the MAC's recommendation to maintain the Graduate Route is heard and respected. It will enable universities in London, and across the country, to continue attracting top global talent and effect growth across the nation. It will also provide comfort to the many international students and graduates in the UK already concerned they are no longer welcome or appreciated.

We urge you to make the right decision on the Graduate Route. The future prosperity of our country depends on it.

Yours Sincerely,



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*London Higher*



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