

Winning the arguments for a people's vote briefing

The impact of a bad Brexit deal – making the case for why we need a people's vote to mitigate against the impact of a bad Brexit

NUS are part of a coalition of organisations across the UK calling for a People's Vote on the final Brexit deal. That's because we believe that students need to have the opportunity to say no if faced with a bad Brexit deal, or even no deal at all.

Over recent months it has become increasingly clear that the chances of the UK leaving the EU with a bad or no deal are rapidly rising. This situation would have devastating impacts on students and our education sector.

Brexit will have wide reaching implications for our education sector and will have a direct impact on students as students. In calling for a People's Vote we are calling for students to have the opportunity to say no to losing access to Erasmus+, facing huge rises in the cost of studying abroad and to large scale losses of income for vital research funding. As such, in campaigning for a People's Vote, students' unions will not be acting ultra vires – to find out more about this you can read our [Ultra Vires briefing here](#).

We are supporting the People's Vote March for the Future on Saturday 20th October, calling for a People's Vote on the final Brexit deal. This briefing is designed to help you make a clear and evidenced case for a People's Vote when

talking to students on your campuses to get them to sign them to attend the demo.

We might lose access to Erasmus+

The Erasmus+ scheme offers opportunities for not only Higher Educations (HE) students but apprentices, volunteers, academics and young people to study, work, volunteer, teach and train across Europe. Whilst membership of Erasmus+ is not dependant on EU membership (countries such as Turkey and Norway are amongst existing members) there is no guarantee of our continued membership after Brexit.

UK and EU negotiators have confirmed their shared commitment to ensuring that the UK continues to participate in Erasmus+ until the end of the current funding cycle in 2020¹. The UK Government have also announced an underwrite guarantee for all UK bids made under the Erasmus+ scheme until the end of 2020, in the case of a no deal scenario².

Whilst these announcements are positive in principle, they will only become reality if the UK parliament and the remaining EU member states are able to reach an agreement. Even the possibility of the Government underwriting UK bids in a no deal scenario depends on us being granted permission from the EU. What is more, even if agreed upon, either of these plans would only secure certainty until 2020, with no commitment at all on the long term opportunity for membership of Erasmus+. This means that students starting

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-report-on-progress-during-phase-1-of-negotiations-under-article-50-teu-on-the-uks-orderly-withdrawal-from-the-eu>

2

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-from-eu-programmes-guaranteed-until-the-end-of-2020>

this academic year have no guarantee about whether they would be able to go on a year abroad in their third year.

Students may be subject to tougher immigration laws

In their Brexit White Paper this summer the Government proposed an EU-UK youth mobility scheme to allow continued educational exchanges when increased border controls are introduced after Brexit³.

There is no guarantee however that this scheme will feature in the final Brexit deal, particularly if the UK take a tough stance in other areas of the negotiation such as trade and customs, and this scheme will be lost all together in the case of a no deal. Without this scheme, both UK students looking to study in the EU for some or all of their course, and EU students looking to come to the UK may be subject to new, stricter immigration laws which severely limit the possibility of academic mobility.

Restricting academic mobility will undermine efforts to widen access to education

We know that HE students who study abroad are 9% more likely to gain a 1st or 2:1 degree and are 24% less likely to be unemployed than those who don't. Similarly, exchange graduates are 9% more likely to be in a graduate job six months after graduation and are 5% higher wage earners six months after graduation.⁴

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-relationship-between-the-united-kingdom-and-the-european-union>

⁴ <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/gone-international-mobility-works.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and->

Whilst students from low socio-economic backgrounds and low participation wards, black and disabled students and care leavers are much less likely to participate in exchange programmes, those that do experience these improvements in academic outcomes more so. BAME students who participate in such programmes for example are 41% less likely to be unemployed than non-exchange students. Similarly, mobile students from disadvantaged backgrounds also earn 6.1% more.⁵

The cost of tuition to study abroad may rise significantly

EU law⁶ requires all member countries to regard all students across the EU as home students, rather than international students. This means that students from EU countries have the right to study in any other country within the EU and pay the same rate of tuition fees as existing residents and nationals. For UK students this means they can currently study at any university in Europe, where tuition fees are generally much lower than in the UK. For EU students, they can study in UK institutions and expect to pay no more than UK students, up to £9,250 a year.

Regardless of any Brexit deal, good or bad, this is almost certain to end. International fees in the EU are often much higher than home fees and in the UK, there is no cap at all on the amount that international students can be charged. EU students coming to the UK will also lose eligibility to apply for a student loan, meaning they may need to pay tuition fee costs from their own pockets after Brexit unless a new EU student loans framework is created. The loss of home fee status looks set to impact

<analysis/reports/Documents/International/widening-participation-in-uk-outward-student-mobility.pdf>

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>

EU students looking to study in Scotland more so, as tuition fees for EU students in Scotland look set to be introduced for the first time after Brexit.

Rising costs and limited support act as a huge barrier to students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, accessing education. We are calling for a People's Vote on the final Brexit deal to give students the chance to say no to this happening.

Students may face additional charges to study abroad

Beyond the cost of tuition fees, students may also see additional costs introduced. International students from outside of the EU currently face a number of expensive costs to come and study in the UK, including the price of a visa, NHS charge, police registration and the costs of taking language tests. Even the best Brexit deal is unlikely to prevent all these costs from being introduced, but a no deal will almost certainly mean that these costs are introduced.

For UK students looking to go to Europe, they again may be subject to additional costs depending on the requirements from country to country. As an example, UK students currently looking to study in America have to pay for expensive health insurance, whereas now students are able to access free or reduced cost healthcare across the EU.

We will lose access to vital research funding

Erasmus+ is just one of many EU funded schemes that students in the UK currently benefit from, with funding from the European Social Fund propping up the Further Education (FE) sector in some of the UK's least privileged areas, and Horizon 2020 providing crucial research funding for our world leading universities. Since Horizon 2020 began in 2014 the UK has been a significant funding recipient securing €4.6 billion, or 14.3% of the overall total. Whilst the Government have made a similar commitment to underwrite any existing bids up until 2020, opportunities for

collaboration will be limited in a no deal scenario and again we have no guarantee of remaining part of the scheme post 2020.

And that's just the start...

- Since 2017 EU law has meant that it is possible to use your smartphone calls, text and data allowance for free when travelling abroad. UK carriers are unsure whether this will continue in a no deal scenario.
- EU regulations have led to the UK [taking divisive action on climate change](#) and protecting the environment- a task that requires unprecedented global action to secure a future for all students. The UK will no longer be bound by this after Brexit.
- Equal pay is enshrined into EU law, [helping women students get a fair wage](#) once they leave education. Again the UK will no longer be obliged to abide by this after Brexit.
- Loss of the European workforce, limits on international collaboration and loss of EU law will have a profound impact on the NHS and [mental health services in particular](#).
- The EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights will no longer be valid after exit day. This will see us lose access to [robust human rights protections](#).
- [The Bank of England is predicting](#) that we'd have an economic crisis as bad as 2008 with a no- deal scenario.

For more information about the work NUS are doing on Brexit, visit our [Brexit hub](#). For more information about the People's March for the Future, visit the hub or email campaigns@nus.org.uk.