

# The EU Referendum – Implications for CoDH Members

## Timeframes and deadlines

Following the vote to leave the EU, the Government is likely to trigger exit negotiations set out under Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. The Government does not have to do this immediately and the Prime Minister has signaled that this process will start after election of a new Conservative party leader in October.

The specified period for Article 50 negotiations is two years, with the option to extend this if it is unanimously supported by the remaining EU member states.

This means that there will be no immediate change (unless the UK Government takes unilateral action) in a range of areas that are of particular importance to the higher education (HE) sector in the UK, including immigration status of staff and students and participation in EU-funded research. The EU Directive governing recognition of professional qualifications (2013/55/EU), which sets parameters for the movement of health professionals across the EU and also specifies a range of requirements in relation to nursing and midwifery education, will also remain in place pending negotiations and decisions on free movement.

The more immediate issues for health HE are therefore likely to result from the diversion of political attention and civil service capacity to the impact of the referendum result, at a time of significant policy change in relation to HE regulation, health education funding in England and research assessment/architecture, and potential implications for the unity of the UK.

## General HE sector issues

Although change in relation to immigration and research funding is unlikely to be immediate, the implications could be profound. Universities UK has carried out detailed analysis of the position following the referendum result and has issued a briefing note to Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

## The EU Referendum – Implications

### Purpose

In light of the UK's decision to withdraw from EU membership, this briefing sets out some initial reflections on implications for CoDH members.

### Relevance

The EU referendum result is likely to have a profound impact across the UK HE sector and there are also specific implications for health HE that need to be highlighted and understood over coming months.

### CoDH Contact

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We will be seeking opportunities to discuss the issues that affect the HE sector in general with UUK and keep members informed of important developments as answers to key questions unfold over coming months.

### **The UK union**

There has been much speculation throughout the referendum campaign on the constitutional implications for the UK union. With Scotland voting unambiguously to remain in the EU it is no surprise that Scotland's First Minister has announced the likelihood of a second independence referendum and preparations for the legislation to allow the referendum are now underway.

### **Impact on civil service capacity and new legislation**

The referendum result will inevitably divert civil service attention and capacity to working out the policy and legislative implications of withdrawal from the EU.

For our work in England, this presents a risk of distraction from the important decisions about pre-registration education funding reform that need to be taken in light of the consultation (which closes on 30 June). Our priority is to continue to meet actively with the relevant officials and continue to press the case for swift decisions and clear communication to the HE sector.

This focus on EU matters also makes it less likely that there will be new major legislation in other areas. We were anticipating the Department of Health in England leading a far-reaching UK-wide review of health professional regulation in October 2016, for example, and this work may not now progress to legislation. We will keep this under review and update members as soon as we know more.

### **Longer term issues for health HE**

There are a range of issues that need careful monitoring as the Article 50 negotiations begin. These include:

- Implications of negotiations in relation to free movement and the UK's approach to Directive 2013/55/EU (including the impact on the requirements for nursing and midwifery education within the Directive);
- Access to EU research funding;



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- Mobility of health staff and implications for workforce supply;
- The future of health professional regulation and the UK dimension of research funding if Scotland votes for independence;
- Immigration status of EU staff and students; the future of Erasmus and other exchange programmes.

### Next steps

The Council's Executive Team meets on 30 June and we will discuss immediate implications for our work. We will keep members informed of any developments in relation to ongoing policy work and will continue our discussions with officials to ensure that important areas, such as the education funding reforms, are given the attention they require.

### Links to analysis and statements from other organisations

- WonkHE: <http://wonkhe.com/blogs/live-britain-votes-to-leave-the-eu/>
- HSJ: <http://www.hsj.co.uk/home/hsj-live/hsj-live-brexit-what-are-the-implications-for-the-nhs/7005878.article>
- UUK statement in light of the referendum result: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/statement-on-eu-referendum-outcome.aspx>