

EU Exit: no deal preparations for higher education institutions

Advice to higher education institutions in England on how to prepare in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Background

Leaving the EU with a deal remains the government's top priority. This has not changed. However, a responsible government must plan for every eventuality, including a no deal scenario. We are intensifying and accelerating no deal planning to ensure we are fully prepared.

The government has launched a public information campaign to ensure that UK citizens, businesses, EU citizens living in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU are well informed about how EU Exit will affect them and the practical steps they may need to take to prepare. Some of the advice applies in both a deal and no deal scenario. All information will be published on the [Prepare for EU Exit website](#).

These pages will enable you to find the latest advice and information on any aspect of EU Exit that affects you. The Department for Education, and other government departments, will publish further information and update information already available.

EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss nationals and the EU Settlement Scheme

In a no deal exit, EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss nationals¹ and their family members living in the UK will be able to work, study, and access benefits and services on broadly the same terms as now.

EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss citizens will need to apply to stay in the UK if they are planning to continue living in the UK after 2020. In a no deal scenario, the EU Settlement Scheme would be open to those living in the UK by 29 March 2019. The deadline for applying will be 31 December 2020 if the UK leaves the EU [without a deal](#).

Higher Education Institutions can play a role in bringing the EU Settlement Scheme to the attention of EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss students and members of staff. Read our [toolkit for employers](#) and details of the [EU Settlement Scheme](#).

Irish citizens' right to live in the UK will not change after the UK has left the EU. They can continue living their lives here as they do now. Irish citizens do not need to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme, but their family members who are not Irish or British citizens will need to. The rights to work, study, access benefits and services will be preserved on a reciprocal basis for UK and Irish nationals. There will also be full protection and maintenance of the current arrangements for journeys between the UK and Ireland. For more information, read our guidance on [Citizens' rights - UK and Irish nationals in the Common Travel Area](#).

Proposals for the future immigration system for students have been published in the white paper 'The UK's future skills-based immigration system'. We will continue to welcome and encourage all international students and place no limit on their numbers.

¹The EU refers to the 27 member states of the European Union, EEA EFTA refers to Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The EEA comprises the EU and the three EEA EFTA countries. EFTA refers to Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

New arrivals

In the event of no deal and following the ending of free movement once the Immigration Bill is enacted, European temporary leave to remain will be granted to EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss citizens newly arriving in the UK after exit to live, study and work here for a period longer than 3 months.

EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss citizens will continue to be able to study in the UK during the transition period. After an initial 3-month period, they can remain in the UK for 36 months if they successfully apply for leave to remain.

Irish citizens will not need to apply for European temporary leave to remain, but their non-British or non-Irish dependants will.

Further guidance is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Student finance

EU, EEA EFTA and Swiss nationals within scope of the citizens' rights EU Settlement Scheme and Irish nationals will continue to be eligible for student finance support on broadly the same terms as now.

Currently, EU citizens (including their family members) who meet the relevant eligibility requirements and study at UK universities are eligible for 'home fee' status on the same basis as those with settled status. See [our guidance](#) for full information on these requirements. Subject to fulfilling eligibility requirements, they are also able to apply for higher education and further education tuition fee loans as well as maintenance support. The precise entitlement to student support differs across the different parts of the UK.

In July 2018, we announced that EU citizens and their family members, starting courses in England in the 2019/20 academic year will remain eligible for undergraduate and postgraduate financial support and Advanced Learner Loans from Student Finance England for the duration of their course providing they meet the

residency requirements. Similar assurances have already been provided for EU students starting courses in earlier academic years.

The eligibility criteria for access to student finance that apply to EEA EFTA nationals, to Swiss nationals and to EU citizens differ.

Swiss nationals (and, where relevant, their family members) may continue to have access to Higher Education student finance if they fulfil relevant residency and other requirements under domestic legislation:

- Swiss nationals who obtain permanent residency status;
- Migrant workers / frontier workers living in the EEA or Switzerland but working in England at least once a week²;
- Family member of Swiss Migrant workers and frontier workers
- Child of a Swiss National (where the Swiss national is exercising his / her free movement rights).

Subject to meeting relevant eligibility criteria, EEA EFTA nationals qualify for access to student finance if they are migrant or frontier workers. Relevant family members of those workers may also be eligible.

Entitlement to student finance and home fees status for EU students starting a course at an English institution in academic years after 2019/20 is under consideration.

The UK Government is firmly committed, in the context of the [Common Travel Area](#) arrangements, to maintaining the right of Irish nationals to access higher and further education courses in the UK on a reciprocal basis. This includes entitlement to home fee status, higher and further education tuition fee loans and maintenance support, subject to meeting the relevant eligibility criteria, on terms no less favourable than those for UK nationals.

² "frontier workers" means Union citizens or United Kingdom nationals who pursue an economic activity as a worker or are established in accordance with EU law in one or more States and who reside in another State.

We have also agreed with the Government of Gibraltar that British Citizens residing in Gibraltar will continue to be eligible in England for higher education home fee status subject to meeting the relevant residency requirement, and subject to concluding a reciprocal agreement for UK students studying at Higher Education Institutions in Gibraltar.

Devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have given similar assurances. However, as funding for higher education is devolved, and differs between the administrations, it is a matter for the relevant devolved administrations to explain to their students how they are likely to be affected.

Data protection

In the event that the UK leaves the EU on 29 March 2019 without a deal, UK organisations will need to ensure they continue to be compliant with data protection law. For organisations that operate only within the UK there will be no immediate change. For organisations that operate internationally or exchange personal data with partners in other countries or whose data is hosted in the EU, there may be changes that need to be made ahead of the UK leaving the EU to ensure minimal risk of disruption. It is important to review whether you would be affected. For those that would be affected, early action is advised as changes may take some time to implement. This [guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office](#) (ICO) sets out in six steps what your organisation should be doing to be prepared for EU exit. Further information and resources on EU exit can be found on the [ICO website](#) and from [EU Exit guidance for](#) organisations.

EU Funding

Erasmus+

We recommend that Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects that are currently contracted continue being delivered, and applications are submitted to the UK National Agency for the 2019 Call for Proposals as normal. We have recently issued further guidance in the form of a [technical notice](#).

Horizon 2020

The government has previously published information on the Horizon 2020 underwrite guarantee and the extension to the guarantee. This information is aimed at UK organisations, such as universities and businesses, who are in receipt of Horizon 2020 funding or who are bidding for such funding, both before and after EU. It will also be of interest to EU organisations who work with UK participants on Horizon 2020 projects. Read the [UK participation in Horizon 2020](#) for more information.

Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications

The [services technical notice](#) sets out arrangements for recognition of professional qualifications in a no deal scenario.

Travel to the EU

If there is no EU Exit deal, you will need to take new action before travelling to an EU destination. There are a number of issues you will need to be aware of when planning travel to the EU for staff or students. The government has published [information on the actions that you will need to consider, including in relation to passports, health cover and transport](#).

If there is no EU Exit deal, after March 2019, UK nationals will need to check the details of their passports and, if necessary, apply for a new one before travel to a Schengen Area country. For most people no action will be required, but if the passport has less than six months validity remaining, it will need to be renewed in advance. Read the guidance on [passport rules after Brexit](#). There will be [full protection and maintenance of the current arrangements for journeys between the UK and Ireland for UK and Irish citizens](#).

You can also read the [information on travel insurance](#) and [transport issues](#).

Preparations as an employer and business

The government has published advice to [inform employers of the potential implications of a no deal exit](#) and steps they can take to prepare. It includes information for organisations in the education sector and covers issues such [as workplace rights and protections that come from EU law](#).

Study in the EU

We have also published [advice for students and citizens who want to study higher education in any EU country](#) after the UK leaves the EU on 29 March 2019.