

Universities as Honest Brokers in Europe and Beyond

Bridging Policy, Industry, and Society

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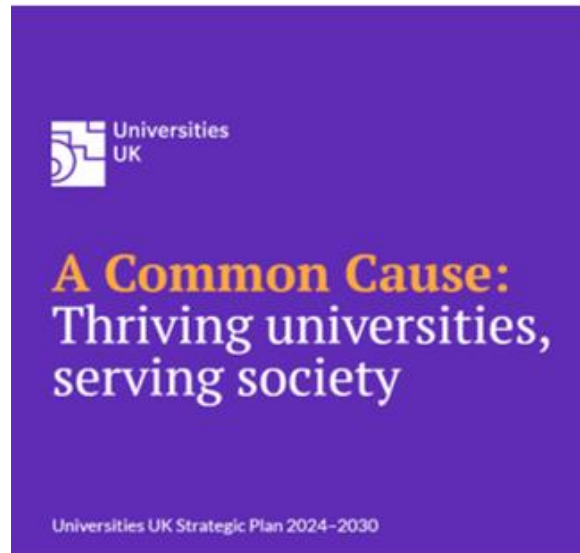
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About Universities UK

We are the collective voice of 142 universities. We work with the government and higher education sector to champion universities, bringing our members together to pursue a common cause: thriving universities, serving society.

We do this by:

- influencing policy and opinion
- bringing universities together to take collective action
- providing insights into and for our universities



Our work focuses on:

- Creating opportunity
- Growing the economy
- Making groundbreaking discoveries
- Securing sustainable funding
- Building pride, trust and confidence in our universities

Universities UK International (UUKi)

In the UK and abroad, we connect higher education leaders, share insights, influence policy and create opportunities. We're the collective voice of UK universities on the international stage.

Our **goal** is to help UK universities flourish internationally through our unique ability to represent them and act in their collective interests.

Our policy priorities are:

- Making the UK an attractive destination for **Global Talent**:
- Fostering international experiences and **Outward Mobility**
- Enhancing the scale, scope and impact of the UK's **Global Research & Innovation** activities
- Growing sustainable, high-impact **Transnational Education**
- Building the capacity and capability in the sector to support **Responsible Global Engagement & Internationalisation**

International dimensions of UK universities

- **685,565 international students** – 23% of the student population.
 - **653,570 students** on UK transnational education programmes
 - 60% of UK research is produced with an international co-author.
 - **77,725 international academic staff** – 32.7% of academic faculty
- Internationalisation in universities encompasses a wide range of activities and benefits.
 - International collaboration and engagement are cornerstones of the success of UK universities.
 - It fosters the capability, capacity and influence that give our sector a global reputation for excellence.
 - Our universities are pivotal players in attracting global talent and foreign direct investment to the UK
 - The global profile and impact of the UK's universities offer unique advantage – and play a critical role in supporting global development.

Our role in brokering partnerships

- **Delegations and missions:** Bilateral visits, workshops and engagements – eg, 6x HEU delegations (France, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Poland) to foster U-2-U partnerships.
- **‘Virtual missions’:** Awareness raising and networking opportunities, bilateral webinars bringing together UK universities and overseas partners to share information on funding modalities and opportunities – and virtual networking between researchers (eg, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia)
- **Information sharing:** Regular email updates – thematic and regional – and close work with professional bodies and organisations to share insights, intelligence and opportunities to ‘gate keepers’ (eg, research managers)
- **Participation in G2G dialogues and committees:** Bilateral Research Dialogues and Joint Committees (eg, France, 2024; Germany, 2024; Italy, 2024; Switzerland, 2025) focusing on emerging technologies, research security, and Horizon Europe
- **Coordination and collaborative platforms:** Use convening power to bring together interested universities and coordinate and direct collaboration on specific issues – eg, Ukraine, Palestine
- **Funding for partnership and collaboration:** UUKi acts as a delivery partner for UK govt funds to foster collaboration and pump prime partnerships – notably via **International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF)**

Case Study 1

The UK-Ukraine Twinning Scheme

- Collaboration between CCG (commercial entity) and UUK following the outbreak of the war in 2022
- Structure and approach developed in close dialogue with senior university leaders in Ukraine
- Universities in UK volunteered and 'twinned' with partners in Ukraine – based on range of factors (eg, disciplines, regional synergies, links, etc)
- Develop a bespoke twinning agreement setting out priorities & actions
- Platform supported by a £250k award from UK govt – but only supports coordination not activity
- UUKi's role: Convene universities, promote and communicate scheme, leverage funding

Achievements

More than 100 partnerships

£5m secured for R&I partnerships –
30+ projects funded

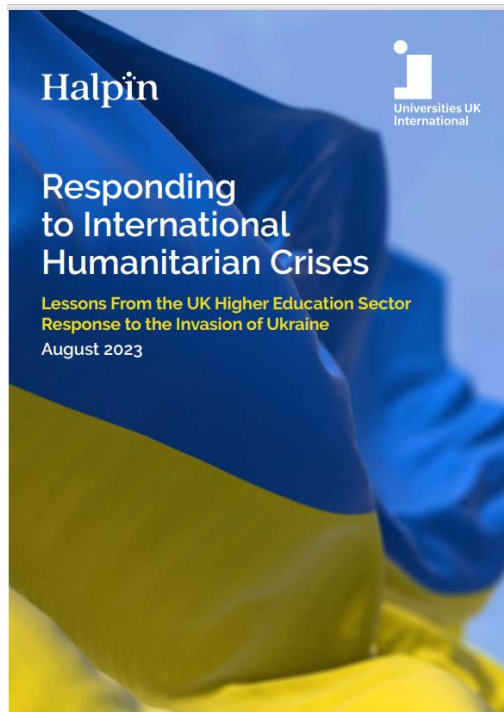
Incorporated into G2G
Ukraine-UK 100-year partnership

10 dual degree programmes established

New 'excellence network' to foster R&I
collaboration and HEU participation

Case Study 1

The UK-Ukraine Twinning Scheme



UKI NEWS

UK-Ukraine Twinning scheme marks three years of partnership and innovation

Last updated on Friday 28 Mar 2025 at 12:22pm



Today, 28 March 2025, marks three years of the UK-Ukraine Twinning initiative.

CREATED
28 Mar 2025

“Our partnership with the University of Wolverhampton has been transformative for Nizhyn Mykola Gogol State University during these challenging times for Ukraine.”

“Through the Twinning Scheme, we have built strong academic connections that have resulted in real achievements, including joint funding for research projects and educational initiatives.”

Case Study 2

The UK-France funding scheme

- Proposal for a bilateral fund emerged from G2G bilateral research dialogue in 2024
- UK and France agreed to create a bilateral fund (800k total)
- UUKi developed the proposal for the UK portion of the scheme (400k)
- Launched the scheme during our Horizon Europe delegation to Paris in October 2024
- **Objective:** to fund mobility and to pump prime collaboration > focus on developing proposals to HEu
- **UUKi role:** Develop, deliver and manage the fund under contract from UK government
- **Key issue:** Very challenging timescales for delivery – and UK / France operating to different financial years make full coordination difficult

Achievements

23 awards made from 98 applications for funding

Total 400k awarded

Mobility – 1 to 8 months

First proposals submitted with partner to Heu as part of wider collaboration

Case Study 2

The UK-France funding scheme

Example

- **Coventry University** collaborated with the French **Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA)** to run technical workshops and develop a Horizon Europe proposal focused on advancing hydrogen energy systems.
- They participated in Phase 1 (2024) and Phase 2 (2025) – demonstrating how partnerships evolve and develop. As part of a wider collaboration, the institutions submitted a bid to HEu in 2025.
- The partnership facilitated by this funding scheme has supported:
 - UK government’s Modern Industrial Strategy
 - UK government’s Hydrogen Strategy
 - Hydrogen as key focus area of the UK-France Bilateral Research Dialogue 2024

“The UK-France pump-priming scheme has been instrumental in building new international partnerships.”

“There is now a well-developed research theme for the training network following discussions, timeframe for delivering the application and set of partners to invite that will enable us to deliver the application. This would not have happened without the pump priming funding.”

Lessons from UUK's experience

- As an NRC, we are only ever a facilitator – the hard work is done by universities. But we have the ability (and responsibility) to: convene members; clarify goals, objectives and opportunities; and coordinate action.
- A critical role for NRCs is to frame the art of the possible: stakeholders may want to over-promise – we need to help articulate ambitious but realisable goals.
- There is a need for vertical and horizontal buy-in within universities: leadership, faculty, professional services all have critical roles to play in partnerships.
- Key issues and considerations:
 - Funding – often limited, and usually short-term and piecemeal rather than strategic
 - Aligning priorities across systems and govts can be challenging – and may exclude universities
 - Identify 'coalitions of the willing' – not every issue can be a priority for everyone
 - Operational parameters can become real barriers to maximising impact – eg, financial years
 - Monitoring impact – can be difficult if there is no funding relationship BUT vital to leveraging future investment



Thank you

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