



## **A message to staff and students ahead of UK's exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020**

Dear HE staff and students,

As universities and the staff and students unions, we recognise and respect that the UK's departure from the European Union on 31 January 2020 is a significant moment in the UK's history. While we want to work constructively with government to ensure that the final terms of our relationship with the EU protect peoples' rights and freedoms, we recognise that the day of Brexit may be a significant, deeply personal and challenging time for the thousands of EU, international and other staff and students who live, work and study in Scotland.

The UK's constitutional relationship with the EU will fundamentally change on 31 January and will continue to do so. Our values as universities, which are open and welcoming to people and ideas from all over the world, have not. Our strength as universities owes so much to the talent, creativity and motivation of staff and students from across the EU and beyond and to the partnerships we have built across borders in the pursuit of new knowledge, new experiences, shared challenges and objectives. That does not change.

It's important we take the opportunity to repeat that message now so that the people in our sector who are most directly and personally affected by the UK's departure from the EU know that they continue to be much valued as members of our community.

If you have any uncertainty over how you will be affected by the UK'S exit on 31 January or beyond the transition period we encourage you to seek advice from your institution, your student association or your trade union.

As the representative bodies of universities and unions of higher education staff and students, we will continue to back up our words with actions, through our advocacy and campaigning, to maintain or create as many opportunities and as much certainty as possible for our staff and students under the UK's new, and emerging, relationship with the EU and the rest of the world. We believe that is to everyone's long-term benefit, whether part of a university or not.

Over the coming weeks and months we will focus on influencing the shape of the UK and Scotland's future relationship with the EU. We will argue for our maximum openness to student and staff talent from the EU. We will assert the value of Erasmus as an opportunity to build bridges between nations.

We will make the case for the strongest possible participation in European research networks, which strengthen our ability to tackle the challenges facing our world.

The talents and friendship of European students and staff, just like other international students and staff, are a huge gift to our nation. We will do everything we can to cherish that.



**Liam McCabe**  
**President, NUS Scotland**



**Mary Senior**  
**Scotland Official, University**  
**and College Union**



**Professor Andrea Nolan,**  
**Convener, Universities Scotland**

January 2020