

Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
Via email

Dear Prime Minister,

Plans to prevent overseas postgraduate taught students from bringing family members to the UK risk damaging the reputation of Global Britain.

The net economic impact of international students in London on the UK economy is just under £10 billion. Data from the Office for National Statistics separately shows that UK higher education exported £25.6bn a year in 2020 despite the pandemic – more than exports of pharmaceuticals or aerospace. As well as bringing economic benefits, these students also underpin our ‘soft power’ by enhancing connections across the globe.

With net migration numbers at record levels, this latest policy must not be the thin edge of the wedge that leads to a damaging clampdown on overseas students. The graduate visa route, in particular, is important to attracting a pipeline of talented students that underpins UK plc and our position at the cutting-edge of research and development, and we are pleased you are committed to protecting this.

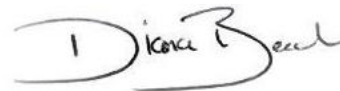
It would be incredibly short-sighted to damage the UK’s world class education sector by signalling that we are closing our doors to international students and their families. Attempts to reduce migration should be grounded in evidence, and not ignore the tangible economic benefits that overseas students bring to our shores.

We instead urge the Government to remove students from net migration figures as the vast majority of these individuals leave the UK shortly after their studies, while those who stay bring much needed skills to our labour market.

Yours sincerely,



John Dickie
Chief Executive
BusinessLDN



Dr Diana Beech
Chief Executive Officer
London Higher

CC: Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education
Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Minister of State (Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education)