

Russell Group and the German U15 Joint Statement

Russell Group and the German U15: A strong and evolving partnership

The close strategic partnership between the German U15 and the Russell Group demonstrates the power of international collaboration in advancing research and addressing the pressing challenges of our time. Our two countries are each other's most important scientific partner in Europe, and our universities and researchers have worked closely and productively together for many years. Working together, we have created regular exchange formats for representatives from the UK and Germany to share best practice and address issues from freedom of expression on campus to research security and the future of academic careers. These meetings have not only helped to find innovative solutions to shared challenges but also helped foster collaborations between individual researchers and partnerships between universities. United in the conviction that research cooperation between the UK and Germany carries great social and economic benefits for both sides, we have intensified our cooperation. The German U15 and the Russell Group are committed to continue to act as catalysts of UK-German academic relations.

Why the UK's association to Horizon Europe is crucial

The single most important thing we could do to maximise the potential of our relationship was to ensure the UK associated in full to Horizon Europe. We are delighted that this has been achieved. Under Horizon 2020, there were more collaborations between Germany and the UK than between any other two countries. The UK was also a significant partner with most other countries in the programme.

We now have the chance to revitalise links between the UK and Germany, and the rest of Europe and other associated countries – building on and complementing new bilateral ties, while anchored in the world's largest collaborative research programme. We said that if the UK associates to Horizon, the European research community would spare no effort to make it a success. The Russell Group and German U15, representing 36 of the top 100 universities in Europe, will be at the forefront of these efforts – making association a 'win-win' for the EU and the UK, as well as excellent news for science, research and innovation across our continent.

Why close collaboration is more important than ever

Research-intensive universities have a pivotal role to play in addressing the challenges confronting our world. We believe that the cutting-edge joint research between our universities is indispensable for managing the climate transition, dealing with increased geopolitical tensions and rising social division. The technological and social innovations we develop together drive mutual economic growth and help to secure our industrial, digital and social future viability. The links built by student and staff exchanges promote mutual understanding and foster future research cooperation. Moreover, many of the

world's most pressing challenges, including climate change, pandemics, the rise of disruptive technologies like AI and quantum computing, are inherently global, requiring shared international expertise, resources, and data.

How to develop our partnership further

This is why the Russell Group and German U15 are committed to deepening their cooperation through the following measures:

1. **Enhancing Research Collaboration:** We will promote deeper research collaborations between our institutions, supporting joint research projects and interdisciplinary initiatives, including collaborations via Horizon Europe and within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) and UK Research & Innovation.
2. **Fostering Student and Faculty Exchange:** We will expand opportunities for student and faculty exchanges, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, culture, and perspectives to enrich the academic experience for all.
3. **Pool Expertise in Areas of High Social Impact:** We will expand bilateral exchanges focused on pressing global challenges such as sustainable energy, healthcare innovation, and social justice. Our institutions will look to pool resources and expertise to effect meaningful change.
4. **Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** We will work together to ensure that our collaborations are inclusive and diverse, reflecting the global nature of the challenges we seek to address.
5. **Engagement with Stakeholders:** We will work with governments, industry, civil society, and other stakeholders to amplify the impact of our research and to promote evidence-based policymaking.