



**UK Research
and Innovation**

Sir Mark Walport, FRS FMedSci
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Sent by email

19 March 2020

Dear Dr Bradshaw,

Thank you for your letter of the 18th March. We recognise the concerns you raise and the serious challenges facing universities as well as the businesses, charities and research organisations we work with. We are committed to working closely and at pace with you and with the government to understand and respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and find the best solutions.

Our immediate priority has been on business continuity to ensure that UKRI continues to operate, and delivers business-critical functions for partners, including paying grants and progressing calls where appropriate. As we look at wider priorities, we will support the sector in ensuring that facilities of critical urgency or importance are protected, whether relating to the current crisis, national security or other considerations.

We are also working with the sector to ensure we provide the greatest possible support to government in understanding and managing the pandemic, drawing on the full range of disciplines, teams and resources that we have in the UK. As you say in your letter, many research staff in institutions across research and higher education sector are redirecting their efforts to focus on supporting front line NHS services, COVID-19 research and developing a vaccine. This is invaluable support in the national effort to combat the ongoing situation.

We know that you are already discussing the measures you need to take to reduce physical attendance at your institutions. We are clear that decisions about what can be stopped or paused will be best made by universities and research institutes themselves. We recognise the potential impact of these decisions and are working closely with government and other funders to understand what measures are necessary to support the research community during this very difficult time, to ensure we protect the capacity of our world-leading R&D system for the longer term.

Thank you for your thoughtful ideas on supporting the sector which we would like to explore further. As you can imagine, we are thinking carefully and urgently about appropriate responses to the situation and are discussing these with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial



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Strategy, the Office for Students, the Department for Education and others. Please get in touch as soon as possible to continue the conversation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Walport". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'M' and 'W'.

Sir Mark Walport
Chief Executive, UKRI

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Kingman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'J' and 'K'.

Sir John Kingman
Non-Executive Chair, UKRI