



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

Research and Higher Education on the Island of Ireland after Brexit

A Report by the Royal Irish Academy Brexit Taskforce



Overview

Ireland cannot afford to overlook the very real risk that the United Kingdom's (UK) exit from the European Union (EU) poses for higher education (HE), north and south, on the island of Ireland.

Since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, research and education have been powerful integrators, helping to secure the peace process and contributing to economic competitiveness and social cohesion on the island of Ireland. Ireland's higher education and research sector is tightly interconnected with that of the UK. Some 10,000 students travel to the UK from Ireland each year for higher education and training. Ireland has more collaborative links with UK partners than with any other country in Horizon 2020 research and innovation programmes, and Irish researchers co-author more international research papers with UK partners than with any other country.

The UK's exit ('Brexit') from the EU occurs at a critical juncture for the higher-education sector in Ireland as the country emerges from a decade of austerity. Severe funding cuts in higher education have been accompanied by a rising demand for HE places: beyond 2017, demand for third-level full-time education is projected to continue to increase substantially until 2029.¹ There are alarming signs of strain across the sector; for example, the decline of Irish universities within global rankings, and poor student-staff ratios. Against this backdrop it is even more remarkable that Ireland's HE sector has continued to recruit global talent, partake in international research collaborations and increase the numbers of international students in Irish higher education institutions (HEIs).²

However, Brexit threatens these green shoots of recovery. The RIA Brexit Taskforce believes there are very real risks for future north-south collaboration in vital sectors; Brexit may jeopardise Horizon 2020 and other research programmes with UK partners; and overburden the Irish higher-education sector with rapidly rising international student numbers.

To offset these risks, the Irish government needs to embark urgently on a programme of sustained and robust investment in higher education. Strategic investment in research and education in the coming years will ensure that the island of Ireland reaps the benefits of internationalisation, builds upon the social, cultural and economic impact of its investment in education, research and innovation, and helps to attract the very best talent to teach, learn and research in Ireland and contribute to an enduring peace process.

'The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering. We must never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families. But we can best honour them through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all.'

- Declaration of Support in the Good Friday Agreement

¹ Department of Education and Skills, 2015, 'Projections of Demand for Full-Time Third Level Education 2015–2029', see: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Statistical-Reports/Projections-of-demand-for-full-time-Third-Level-Education-2015-2029.pdf>.

² Higher Education Authority, 2016, *Brexit and Irish Higher Education and Research: Challenges and Opportunities*, available at: <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/Brexit-And-Irish-Higher-Education-And-Research-Challenges-And-Opportunities.pdf>.

Strategic Actions

The Royal Irish Academy Brexit Taskforce proposes three action areas to harness opportunities for higher education and research on the island of Ireland in the context of Brexit:

1

Actions to maintain the beneficial north-south, east-west axis between Ireland and Northern Ireland, and Ireland and Britain, in higher education and research;

2

Actions to address underinvestment in higher education (north and south) and research to better position Ireland as a global hub for excellence in teaching and learning and research;

3

Actions to align national research and internationalisation strategies that will grow Ireland's international research connectivity and enhance its reputation as a hub for international talent.

These actions are necessary to secure the international excellence and quality of higher education and research in Ireland, enhance its capacity to attract and retain talent, jobs and investment, and contribute to an enduring peace process.

The Taskforce has consciously kept these actions at a high level, recognising that individual HEIs and government agencies are developing and rolling out Brexit strategies that best suit their individual institutional priorities.



Actions to maintain the beneficial north-south, east-west axis between Ireland and Northern Ireland, and Ireland and Britain, in higher education and research.

- a) Secure the rights and entitlements of Irish and UK citizens within the common travel area;
- b) Pursue the continuance of the current fee status and eligibility for access to higher education in Ireland and the UK which is now enjoyed by UK and Irish students;
- c) Create a bespoke suite of programmes including bilateral funding agreements to support a new Irish-British research area enabling north-south, east-west academic research mobility and partnerships;
- d) Enhanced promotion and mobility programmes to bring global student and research talent to Ireland;
- e) Support for pan-island bodies such as the Royal Irish Academy and Universities Ireland to enable continued all-island and Ireland-UK dialogue within and beyond the education sector.



Actions to address underinvestment in higher education and research to better position Ireland as a global hub for excellence in teaching and learning and research.

- a) Move to a sustainable multi-annual funding base for Irish HEIs in line with the recommendations of the Expert Group on Future Funding Options for Higher Education;³
- b) Additional capital allocations to support higher education and research, having regard to the needs of the system from basic to applied, across all disciplines and career stages;
- c) Targeted investment to support quality teaching and learning (T&L) within HEIs, recognising the importance of T&L in international student destination decision making;
- d) Full implementation of the Department of Education and Skills' (2016) *Foreign Languages in Education Strategy* to foster greater foreign language skills at all educational stages, recognising the critical need for such skills to achieve Ireland's internationalisation ambitions;
- e) Ireland to set new ambitions for Erasmus+ participation with a focus on increasing the numbers of Irish staff and students participating in Erasmus+ and the numbers of inward Erasmus+ placements to Ireland.



Actions to align national research and internationalisation strategies to grow Ireland's international research connectivity and enhance its reputation as a hub for international talent.

- a) A new capital investment programme to fund research infrastructure in Ireland's HEIs on a competitive basis across all disciplines;
- b) An intensified promotional campaign to target international students and researchers, emphasising Ireland's attractiveness as a place to work, study and live;
- c) Additional investment to support international research network building and researcher mobility across all career stages;
- d) Use the Innovation 2020 and preparatory process for Framework Programme 9 to align targets and objectives to create a more balanced portfolio of investment in competitively allocated research funding across all disciplines and career stages;
- e) Encourage greater participation of Irish-based researchers and academics in international and European science policy, and implementation to strengthen Ireland's global alliances;
- f) Explore the feasibility of joint degrees with universities in EU member states.

³ Department of Education and Skills, 2016, *Report of the Expert Group on Future Funding of Higher Education in Ireland. Investing in National Ambition: A Strategy for Funding Higher Education*, Dublin.

Brexit: risks for higher education and research on the island of Ireland

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2012), the International Education Strategy for Ireland to 2020 (2016), and Innovation 2020 (2015) collectively express Ireland's ambitions to:

- Establish itself as a global talent magnet for the very best students, academics and researchers;
- Deliver a high-quality teaching and learning experience and environment;
- Create the opportunities and environment necessary for excellent research and innovation to flourish.

The eventual terms of the UK's withdrawal from, and post-Brexit engagement with, the EU will determine the range and scale of opportunity and challenge for Irish HEIs. Several scenarios need to be considered by each Irish HEI, including how/whether the relationship with UK HEIs is maintained, diminished or strengthened. These scenarios might include, inter alia:

- 'Hard Brexit' and no common travel area;
- Maintenance of common travel area;
- Disengagement of the UK from EU research funding;
- Disengagement of the UK from Erasmus+ mobility programmes.

Each of these scenarios could be a significant disruption to higher education and research on the island of Ireland. The RIA Brexit Taskforce survey of academics on the island of Ireland⁴ identified the following risks within a specific 'hard Brexit' scenario:

- a) Reduced staff and student mobility between Ireland and the UK in the absence of an agreed common travel area or agreement by the UK on free movement of EU nationals;
- b) The application of international student fee charges by UK HEIs to Irish students;
- c) Significant capacity issues for Irish HEIs should the 10,000 Irish-based students travelling to the UK each year for higher education now need to be accommodated within the Irish system;⁵
- d) Reduced east-west research collaboration with a corresponding decline in Ireland's international research profile.⁶ Ireland co-authors more scientific papers with the UK than with Germany and France combined;⁷
- e) The loss of a significant collaborative partner in multi-country research collaborations competing for international funding, including EU research, structural and regional funds;
- f) A decline in opportunities for cross-border research and education collaboration and cooperation;
- g) Ireland's higher education and research system may become less attractive to UK citizens: a 'best guess' estimate puts the number of UK citizens holding academic or research posts in Irish HEIs at between 7 and 10 per cent;⁸
- h) Isolation of Northern Ireland education institutions from all-island opportunities in contradiction with the objectives of the Good Friday Agreement.

Risks to Student Mobility

Assuming a 'hard Brexit' with no special arrangement between the UK and Ireland were to happen, Irish students would face three specific options:

- Pay the full international student fees to study at a UK university (on average between £15,000 and £30,000 per annum);
- Apply to a different EU country;
- Stay in Ireland and search for places in domestic universities through the CAO entry route. Should most Irish students choose to apply through the CAO, in this scenario, HEIs in the Republic of Ireland would have to provide an extra 6 per cent of student places, a development that would, in the absence of extra funding, aggravate student-staff ratios and have commensurate deleterious consequences for international academic rankings.

⁴ Royal Irish Academy, 2017, *RIA Brexit Taskforce Survey Results: Impacts and Opportunities for Higher Education and Research on the Island of Ireland post-Brexit*, Dublin, available at: https://www.ria.ie/sites/default/files/ria_brexit_taskforce_survey_results_report_final.pdf.

⁵ Between 10–12,000 people flow between Ireland and Great Britain each year for higher education and professional training, with by far the greatest number of students travelling from Ireland to the UK (HEA Statistics, HESA Statistics, 2009–15).

⁶ A clear majority of respondents to the Academy's survey of its academic members and early career researchers 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that collaborations between Ireland and the UK are significant in their discipline (See: *RIA Brexit Taskforce Survey Results*).

⁷ Irish researchers co-authored 12,201 papers with UK researchers during 2011–15. This was more than the combined total of papers co-authored with German and French researchers (Elsevier SciVal, 2011–15).

⁸ See presentation of the RIA Brexit Taskforce at Brexit Stakeholders Consultation, 26 June 2017. All HEIs in Ireland were asked to supply data on the number of UK citizens holding academic and research posts. Six Irish HEIs responded.

Addressing the risks of Brexit to Ireland's higher-education ambitions

Reflecting on the risks posed for higher education by Brexit, the Taskforce suggests three priority action areas to ensure Ireland's continued progress in achieving these ambitions.

1



Actions to maintain the beneficial north-south, east-west axis between Ireland and Northern Ireland, and Ireland and Britain, in higher education and research.

2



Actions to enable additional capital and infrastructure investment in higher education and research, and support for international mobility to position Ireland as a global hub for excellence in higher education and research.

3



Actions to align national research and internationalisation strategies to grow Ireland's international research connectivity and enhance its reputation as a hub for international talent.

A consideration of the likely impact of Brexit for higher education in Northern Ireland is outlined in the companion paper *Higher Education and Research in Northern Ireland post-Brexit: a paper by the Royal Irish Academy Brexit Taskforce* (Northern Ireland Working Group).⁹

'We acknowledge the substantial differences between our continuing, and equally legitimate, political aspirations. However, we will endeavour to strive in every practical way towards reconciliation and rapprochement within the framework of democratic and agreed arrangements.'

- Declaration of Support in the Good Friday Agreement

⁹ Available at: <https://www.ria.ie/reports/policy-reports-0>.



STRATEGIC ACTION I:

Actions to maintain the beneficial north-south, east-west axis between Ireland and Northern Ireland, and Ireland and Britain, in higher education and research

Brexit has illuminated the extent and value of the network of academic and research collaborations, north and south, east and west, occurring on the island of Ireland and with the UK.

Strand 2 of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement recognises education as a suitable area for all-island cooperation.

Post-1998, research and education have been powerful integrators, helping to secure the peace process and contributing to economic competitiveness and social cohesion on the island of Ireland. These activities have been promoted by various EU funding initiatives, including the INTERREG IVA Programme (a regional structural funding programme for Northern Ireland, the border regions and western Scotland), the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland (PEACE Programme) and successive EU research Framework Programmes, including Horizon 2020.

These activities have been greatly facilitated by the invisible border between both parts of the island resulting from common membership of the European single market. As a result, and encouraged by the

Good Friday Agreement, the island of Ireland continues to accrue significant benefits from the development of a de facto all-island research system that operates in key sectors such as agriculture, food and nutrition, health, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, engineering and informatics, and from the social dividends arising from the cross-border flow of people to study and work in higher education.

It is critical that Ireland continues to do all it can to promote inter-community stability in Northern Ireland—via cross-border education and research collaboration—and to reinforce the peace process at this moment of intense instability and uncertainty. Robust mechanisms to secure future Ireland-Northern Ireland-Britain cooperation for the purposes of higher education, training and research are vital.

The Taskforce welcomes recent comments from the Irish government calling for 'the Common Travel Area maintained, protecting the free movement of people and the mutually beneficial flow of students, staff and researchers...continued UK/Ireland research collaborations'.¹⁰ The UK government has expressed its desire to achieve 'an ambitious science and innovation agreement with the EU'.

The Taskforce calls upon the UK and Irish governments to work together to:

1. Secure commitments as to the rights and entitlements of Irish and UK citizens within the common travel area;
2. Pursue actively the continuance of the current fee status and eligibility for access to the higher education and research system enjoyed by Irish and UK citizens in each other's jurisdictions;
3. Create a bespoke suite of programmes including bilateral funding agreements to support a new Irish-British research area enabling north-south, east-west academic research mobility and partnerships;¹¹
4. Encourage enhanced promotion and mobility programmes to bring global student and research talent to Ireland, north and south;
5. Provide support for pan-island bodies such as the Royal Irish Academy and Universities Ireland to enable continued all-island and Ireland-UK dialogue.

¹⁰ Speech by An Taoiseach, Mr Leo Varadkar, TD at the TCD 425 Symposium, 25 September 2017. See: https://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/News/Taoiseach's_Speeches/Speech_by_the_Taoiseach_Mr_Leo_Varadkar_T_D_at_the_Trinity_425_Symposium.html

¹¹ A small number of bilateral schemes are in place via the Irish Research Council, the Royal Irish Academy, the Health Research Board and Science Foundation Ireland, but are limited in scope and investment.



STRATEGIC ACTION 2:

Actions to address underinvestment in higher education and research to better position Ireland as a global hub for excellence in teaching and learning and research

Ireland's higher-education systems, north and south, are a major all-island asset, yielding significant benefits. It has a large international impact, plays a substantial role in promoting Ireland overseas, attracts thousands of international students each year, generates significant beneficial income flows, and creates, attracts and maintains the knowledge, scientific skills and technological capacity required to inform government policy and sustain an innovation-driven society.

A disadvantageous change in Irish students' eligibility for fees, student loans and access to UK HEIs is likely to lead to a fall in the numbers choosing to study in UK HEIs and a corresponding rise in demand for domestic HE places. Rising domestic demand on top of existing infrastructural challenges would pose significant capacity challenges for Irish HEIs, which have already absorbed an additional 15,000 students during 2013–16.¹² An additional 6 per cent capacity would be needed to fully absorb those Irish students currently studying in the UK¹³ and further additional capacity may be needed to achieve agreed ambitious international student recruitment targets and attract even a small percentage of the large numbers of EU and international students who study in the UK. The 17 per cent rise in international student applications to Irish HEIs for September 2017 enrolment is a suggestive indicator of the opportunities that may exist but also of the capacity challenges that may arise.

The Taskforce welcomes the stated national ambition to grow by at least 50 per cent Ireland's participation in Erasmus+ outward mobility schemes.¹⁴ However, linguistic preparation and ability are key to this. International alliances are undoubtedly enabled by shared values and language. Ireland currently performs poorly in terms of student numbers pursuing foreign languages at third level,¹⁵ multilingual skills being repeatedly identified as a key area of national skills shortages by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs.¹⁶

Ireland must set ambitious goals to grow inward mobility both as a means of showcasing the quality of its higher education and for the longer term, to strengthen its alliances and relationships with fellow EU member states.¹⁷ Looking at the Erasmus+ scheme, for example, the UK is a 'top 5' destination for EU students for studies and work placements.¹⁸

Irish HEIs have repeatedly identified a pressing need for additional funding, not simply to help attract additional talent but to provide the necessary teaching and learning and research environment for talent to flourish and fulfil its contribution.

Attracting more world-class international and EU students benefits Ireland's higher-education system, secures a pipeline of research talent and skills and offers important benefits for Ireland's society and culture. Global rankings influence the investment decisions of foreign direct investment and the destination choices made by international students. Irish universities' global rankings fell sharply during 2003–16, a fact largely attributed by university presidents to continual underinvestment from the state in the sector in the past decade.¹⁹ A further and associated indicator of concern is the high staff-student ratios currently recorded for Irish HE.²⁰ At 19.6 students per staff member, Ireland has a higher ratio than many of its European counterparts.²¹ A 2017 NERI Working Paper noted 'Ireland invests significantly less in R&D than other similar small open economies in Western Europe... Government outlays are also below the OECD and EU averages.'²²

¹² 'Concerns over quality of third-level tuition prompts review', *Irish Times*, 25 July 2017, available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/concerns-over-quality-of-third-level-tuition-prompts-review-1.3165491>.

¹³ HEA Statistics, HESA Statistics, 2009, 15.

¹⁴ Speech by the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Richard Bruton, TD, 19 April 2017, see: <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2017-Press-Releases/PR17-04-19.html>.

¹⁵ Roughly 2–3 per cent of enrolments in HEA-funded institutes reported studying a modern foreign language as a main subject (Expert Group on Future Skills).

¹⁶ See: https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Bodies-and-Committees/EGFSN_Guidance_HE_Providers_Current_Future_Skills_Needs_Enterprise_Springboard2015.pdf.

¹⁷ In 2014/15, Ireland received 7,216 Erasmus+ HE students compared to the UK's 30,183. See: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/statistics_en.

¹⁸ See *Report by the European Commission. Erasmus: Facts, Figures & Trends*, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/statistics/erasmus-plus-facts-figures_en.pdf.

¹⁹ See: QS Global University Rankings, 2007–16. Also: 'Irish universities continue to fall in global rankings', *Irish Times*, 6 September 2016, available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/irish-universities-continue-to-fall-in-global-rankings-1.2780719>.

²⁰ Such ratios are used in global university rankings as a proxy metric for teaching quality.

²¹ OECD Student Ranking Statistics, *Figures for Tertiary Education and HEA Higher Education System Performance 2014–16*, available at: <http://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/Higher-Education-System-Performance-2014%E2%80%932016.pdf>.

²² McDonnell, 2017, *Innovative Competence: How does the Republic of Ireland Fare and does it Matter?* NERI Working Paper Series no. 40, p. 1, available at: https://www.neri.ie/net/download/pdf/innovation_working_paper.pdf.

The sector can and will continue to play a role in this as demonstrated by its success in growing alternative income streams via industry, philanthropy and international student recruitment. Nevertheless, growing capacity on the back of historical investment requires:

1. A move to a sustainable multi-annual funding base for Irish HEIs in line with the recommendations of the Expert Group on Future Funding Options for Higher Education;²³
2. Use of the Innovation 2020 and preparatory process for Framework Programme 9 to align targets and objectives to create a more balanced portfolio of investment in competitively allocated research funding across all disciplines and career stages;
3. Targeted investment to support T&L within HEIs, recognising the importance of T&L in international student destination decision making;
4. Full implementation of the Department of Education and Skills (2016) *Foreign Languages in Education Strategy* to foster greater competency in foreign language skills at all educational stages, recognising the critical need for such skills to achieve Ireland's internationalisation ambitions;
5. Ireland should revisit its ambitions for Erasmus+ participation to increase the numbers of Irish staff and students participating in Erasmus+, and the numbers of inward Erasmus+ placements.



²³ Department of Education and Skills, *Report of the Expert Group on Future Funding of Higher Education in Ireland*, 2016.



STRATEGIC ACTION 3:

Actions to align national research and internationalisation strategies to grow Ireland's international research connectivity and enhance its reputation as a hub for international talent

Research performance is a key innovation driver. A decline in the number of internationally co-authored scientific papers²⁴ will directly affect Ireland's performance in international benchmarks assessing innovation, e.g. European Innovation Scoreboard.²⁵ The UK is Ireland's number one collaborator for co-authored scientific papers,²⁶ and Ireland has more collaborative links with UK partners in Horizon 2020 than with any other country, albeit by a narrow margin.²⁷ Ireland maintains membership of appropriate International Research Organisations and committed in Innovation 2020 to review the benefits of existing and potential International Research Organisation memberships by 2020.

The loss of Ireland's number one international collaborator from EU funding systems requires Ireland to both attract more international talent to Ireland and take actions to support Irish-based researchers to build stronger links and collaborations internationally. Ireland must become better at retaining its very best talent and at attracting foreign talent. Attracting and retaining talent are key to building Ireland's international profile, increasing its chances in winning competitive international funding, participating in stronger international

collaborations and offering the very best teaching and learning experience. Irish HEIs must be supported in their efforts to win talent.

In their contributions to the Taskforce, several HEIs pointed to existing restraints upon their capacity to attract international talent, including salary restrictions and government-imposed restrictions on staff numbers, and perceptions of Ireland as an expensive destination to relocate to. Currently, several HEIs are investigating the possibility of fractional or joint appointments between their institution and UK HEIs; however, they caution that such appointments are uncommon due to the administrative and regulatory complexities inherent in them.

Attracting international talent is complicated but evidence suggests that a robust frontier-research funding ecosystem is a key attractor.²⁸ Ireland must build a stronger and more robust and balanced domestic research funding structure to better position it to first, develop its domestic research talent pool, second, attract international talent and finally, compete for prestigious basic frontier-research funding such as the European Research Council Awards.

This is an exceptional moment that requires Ireland to make immediate investment if we are to benefit from the very real opportunities to position Ireland as a global hub for research, education and talent. The pathways outlined in key government strategies including Innovation 2020 and the International Education Strategy should continue to be followed but with an additional emphasis placed upon initiatives to:

1. Use the Innovation 2020 and preparatory process for Framework Programme 9 to align targets and objectives to create a more balanced portfolio of investment in competitively allocated research funding across all disciplines and career stages;
2. Create an intensified promotional campaign to target international students and researchers, emphasising Ireland's attractiveness as a safe and welcoming place to work, study and live;
3. Bring additional investment to support international research network building and researcher mobility across all career stages and in all disciplines;
4. Actively promote greater participation of Irish-based researchers and academics in international and European science policy and implementation to strengthen Ireland's global alliances;
5. Explore the feasibility of joint degrees with universities in EU member states and also globally.

²⁴ Growing patterns of collaboration and co-working on scientific research papers are evident with the US, Germany, France, Spain and Italy, but these still lag far behind the numbers of Irish-UK collaborations. (See: Elsevier Sci Val, 2011–15.)

²⁵ See European Innovation Scoreboard 2016, available at: http://www.knowledgetransferireland.com/About_KTI/Reports-Publications/European-Innovation-Scoreboard-2016.pdf.

²⁶ The US was Ireland's second most numerous co-author after the UK 2011–15, followed by Germany and France. (Elsevier Sci Val, 2011–15).

²⁷ See: http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/country-profiles/ie_country_profile_and_featured_projects.pdf#zoom=125&pagemode=none, and Enterprise Ireland, data as of 28 February 2017 statistics. The margin is narrow as Ireland has 1,139 collaborative links with Germany, 1,013 with Spain and 883 with France.

²⁸ Domenico, M. and Arenas, A., 'Researcher incentives: EU cash goes to the sticky and attractive'. *Nature*, 2016/03/31, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/531580c>.

About the RIA Brexit Taskforce

The Royal Irish Academy/Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann (RIA) is Ireland's leading body of experts in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. Operating as an independent, all-island body, the RIA champions excellence in research, teaching and learning, north and south.

In March 2017 the RIA established the high-level Brexit Taskforce to consider the likely implications of the United Kingdom's decision to exit from the European Union for higher education and research across the island of Ireland. The Taskforce, co-chaired by Professor Jane Ohlmeyer, MRIA and Professor Gerry McKenna, MRIA, was composed of two Working Groups exploring sector-specific concerns and challenges arising from Brexit for the Irish and Northern Irish higher-education systems. Full membership of the Taskforce is outlined in Appendix I.

During April – September 2017 the Taskforce undertook wide-ranging consultation and data gathering and analysis including an all-island survey of Academy members and academic researchers,²⁹ roundtable consultations with higher education and policy stakeholders in Belfast and Dublin, and individual meetings with representative higher-education and industry bodies. The Taskforce, through the Royal Irish Academy, contributes to discussions with the UK academies on those issues.

This paper is a companion paper to the *Report of the RIA Brexit Taskforce Survey Results: Impacts and Opportunities for Higher Education and Research on the Island of Ireland post-Brexit* (May 2017), *RIA-Brexit Higher Education Factsheet* (October 2017) and the *Final Report of the RIA Northern Ireland Brexit Working Group: Higher Education and Research in Northern Ireland post-Brexit* (November 2017).³⁰

RIA: Supporting Irish science internationally

The Royal Irish Academy nominates and supports the participation of Irish researchers in numerous global science policy fora. In 2017 RIA nominees represented Irish science in fora looking at negative carbon storage, climate change and health, food security and trust, truth and expertise.

²⁹ The full results of this survey are available to download at: https://www.ria.ie/sites/default/files/ria_brexit_taskforce_survey_results_report_final.pdf.

³⁰ See: <https://www.ria.ie/reports/policy-reports-0>.

Membership of the Royal Irish Academy Brexit Taskforce

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Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

The Royal Irish Academy is Ireland's leading body of experts in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. The RIA Brexit Taskforce was established in March 2017 to explore the implications for research and higher education on the island of Ireland on foot of the UK's exit from the European Union and has a specific all-island focus.

For more information see www.ria.ie/programmes/policy-and-international-relations/ria-brexit-taskforce or email policy@ria.ie.