

## Interesting comments from Westminster Summer 2024

[ALL volunteers have kept on eye on things for your interest](#)

### 1. from the Secretary of State , Bridget Philipson

@bphilipsonMP

Video tweet on X on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024: - **a new era of optimism.**

*We're resetting the relationship between the government and those working in education. Together, we'll deliver change: the best start in life for every child, high & rising standards and a country where background is no barrier.*

Tweet on X on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2024 -

*Where you're from shouldn't determine where you end up. If you work hard, you should be able to get on. These are basic values held by people across our country. It is Labour's mission to make them a reality again after 14 years of the Tories baking inequality into our society.*

Extracted from **speech at the Embassy Education Conference**, July 2024 (emboldened text is ours.)

... for too long international students have been treated as political footballs, not valued guests.

Their fees welcomed, but their presence resented.

Exploited for cheap headlines, not cherished for all they bring to our communities.

This government will take a different approach and we will speak clearly.

Be in no doubt: international students are welcome in the UK.

This new government values their contribution – to our universities, to our communities, to our country.

I want Britain to welcome those who want to come to these shores to study, and meet the requirements to do so.

Now this is part of a wider sea change here in the UK.

Under this new government, education is once again at the forefront of national life.

Under this new government, universities are a public good, not a political battleground.

Under this new government, opportunity is for everyone.

And our international partnerships are central to this drive to spread opportunity far and wide.

The more we work together, the more progress we will see in the world – partners in the push for better.

Closed systems that only look inward quickly run out of ideas. Creativity crumbles, innovation dies, the same thoughts spin round and round and collapse in on themselves.

But through our international partners, we can reach out across the world and bring back a freshness of thought that breathes new life into our society.

That includes our universities, and it includes international students.

How could it not?

These people are brave. They move to a new culture, far away from their homes and their families.

They take a leap of faith, hoping to develop new skills and chase new horizons. And I am enormously proud that so many want to take that leap here in the UK.

And we will do everything we can to help them succeed.

That's why we offer the opportunity to remain in the UK on a graduate visa for 2 years after their studies end – or 3 for PhDs – to work, to live, and to contribute.

While this government is committed to managing migration carefully, international students will always be welcome in this country.

The UK wouldn't be the same without them.

Arts, music, culture, sport, food, language, humour – international students drive dynamism on so many levels.

And of course, their contribution to the British economy is substantial. Each international student adds about £100,000 to our national prosperity.

This impact is not just a national statistic. It's felt in towns and cities right across country.

I've seen it in Sunderland, where I have the privilege to serve as a member of parliament. The city is home to almost 5,000 international students.

Many come from China, flying across the world to study at the University of Sunderland. I welcome their presence and I value their contribution.

And students from all nations add to the city's buzz.

More footfall on our highstreets.

More laughter in our pubs.

More conversation in our cafes.

International students contribute so much to my home city, so much to our country. And they get so much in return. The UK is a fantastic place to come and study.

Every student who steps off the plane in Manchester or arrives on the Eurostar in London is a vote of confidence in our universities.

Students come because they know they will receive a world class education. They come because they know it sets them up for success.

Many go on to positions of power. Above the desks of leaders around the world sit certificates from British universities.

They, and hopefully many of you, will know the joy of living abroad, the excitement of discovering a new culture, a new perspective, perhaps even a new weather system ...

... education is all about.

A force for good in people's lives, a force for good in our world.

A generation of young people who have studied abroad and cultivated friendships with people from different cultures – those ties make the world a safer, more vibrant place.

This new government is mission-led. And I am leading on the mission to break down the barriers to opportunity.

I am determined to make Britain the international home of opportunity.

So I want genuine partnerships with countries across the world in higher education and beyond.

We already have deep education partnerships with countless countries around the globe, and I want to build more.

From our closest neighbours, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, to major regional powers, India, Nigeria, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, important allies, the US and Australia, to world leading systems like Singapore and Japan, and many others.

Whether that's through British international schools abroad, or cross-border collaboration on skills training.

School trips and scholarships, exchange programmes and language learning, policy conversations that span the early years to learners with special educational needs.

And I want our universities to work with their international partners to deliver courses across borders.

Education must be at the forefront of tackling the major global challenges of our time.

Artificial intelligence, climate change, poverty, misinformation, polarisation, war and instability.

Education puts us on the path to freedom.

Intellectual freedom. Economic freedom. Social freedom. Cultural freedom.

Through education, we can enlarge and expand those freedoms, we can show that government is a power not just for administration but for transformation.

The answer is partnership. And the answer is education...

As I close, I want to extend an invitation to all your education ministers to attend the **education world forum here in London next year from the 18th to the 21st of May.**

You can expect a rich exchange of ideas, visits to schools, colleges and universities, and enlightening keynote speakers.

This is a time of change here in Britain. A new age of hope. A new era of optimism for our country....

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/bridget-phillipsons-speech-at-the-embassy-education-conference>

## **2) From the House of Lords**

Debate on King's speech (3rd Day) Friday 19<sup>th</sup>. July 2024 (... indicates omitted text)

Bs Cousins: I shall flag up just one of the barriers to the teaching and learning of languages: the viability of educational trips and exchanges. Some 50% of schools are now cutting them, with that figure rising to 68% in deprived areas, but the good news is that this can be fixed, and quickly—a perfect early win for an incoming Government committed both to tackling regional and other inequalities and to creating opportunities.

The new Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, has already said that he is determined to do more to champion school and student exchanges as a vital part of resetting the UK's relations with our European allies. He told his German opposite number that he hopes

“we can fix that school visits issue”,

and he appeared willing to consider the EU's proposal to establish a youth mobility scheme for 18 to 30 year-olds to study and work, in welcome contrast to the immediate dismissal of this idea by both Labour and the then Government before the election. ...

... A plan of action was submitted by the All-Party Group on Modern Languages to the then Schools Minister in February, so I hope the new Government will support this and start notching up some early changes and successes, knowing that the benefit of trips and exchanges not only applies to the take-up of languages but enhances many other areas of the curriculum, including geography, history, STEM subjects, art and sports. There is also an important positive impact of reciprocal mobility schemes on the supply chain for MFL teachers, and we know from DfE figures that we are looking at a chronic shortage there, second only to maths...

... Teachers have told us that the problem is a combination of post-Brexit paperwork for travel and border checks, the burden of DBS checks, missing or conflicting official guidance, and access to opportunity and funding. The paperwork and costs must be reviewed, including bringing back the list of travellers scheme and the group passport scheme....

... Where passports are necessary, the cost must be reduced; £53.50 for under-16s is just too much for many families. Then we need clear and consistent guidance to help teachers plan. FCDO travel entry information needs to cover school groups that include both UK and non-UK

nationals. Discrepancies between advice to schools from local authorities and from the FCDO must be ironed out. All this could and should be done cost-free and is quickly achievable. DBS checks are now less onerous but the changes are not yet common knowledge in schools, so much more needs to be done to communicate them. That is another quick and cost-free fix...

... Finally, I urge the Minister to review the Turing Scheme. The more streamlined application process is welcome but schools have told us that they want a multiyear funding cycle, because a single-year cycle is impractical for many schools and colleges, and for their international partnerships. We also know that reciprocity helps the future MFL teacher supply chain. The easiest way of doing this, of course, would be to rejoin Erasmus+ as a non-EU associate country. I implore the Minister to reopen negotiations on this out of sheer enlightened self-interest for the UK.