

Australia–United Kingdom Education Dialogue

Ministers Meeting

13 April 2017

Communique

Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) have a mature and long-standing education relationship signified by effective government agency engagement, robust student mobility, multilateral cooperation, institutional linkages and research collaboration. This relationship is supported through the Australia–United Kingdom Education Dialogue which provides an opportunity for both countries to progress cooperation on a range of education, training and research related issues.

The second Australia–United Kingdom Education Dialogue was co-chaired by Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Australian Government Minister for Education and Training, and The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, UK Minister of State for School Standards.

At their meeting on Thursday 13 April 2017, Ministers agreed to work together to further expand bilateral education and research cooperation and policy dialogue over the long-term.

1. Sharing research and best practice in education

Improving pupil outcomes

Ministers acknowledged the importance of using high-quality data and evidence to inform policy-making and to drive improved pupil achievement. Ministers agreed to:

- Share best practice in the teaching of phonics and assessment of pupils in the early years of schooling in order to identify difficulties and implement appropriate intervention strategies.
- Collaborate in multilateral fora including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and harness results from international assessments such as the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) to inform the development of policy that supports improved outcomes for pupils.
- Support an ongoing dialogue between officials to develop a coherent, proactive and evidence-based strategy for approaching science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education so that school pupils have the knowledge required to take advantage of career options of the future, and that both countries remain competitive in this era of fast-paced technological change.

Technical Education, apprenticeships and skills

Ministers discussed the post-16 education landscape in their respective countries and recent reforms to technical education and apprenticeships in England. Ministers:

- Underlined the importance of ensuring young people get the knowledge and skills they need to secure better-paid, higher-quality jobs and agreed to encourage further policy sharing at officials level.
- Shared best practice approaches to apprenticeships policy including Higher and Degree Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship training.

Teaching profession

Ministers discussed the similarities and differences between the teaching profession in Australia and the UK. They identified opportunities to share information on key areas of reform and future direction, and agreed to collaborate on:

- The impact of initial teacher education reforms on the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes.
- Initiatives to improve teacher quality including evaluation of teacher effectiveness/performance; teacher standards and certification; and professional development, including classroom observation, feedback and mentoring.
- School leadership and autonomy, including principal certification.

2. Strengthening collaboration at the government-to-government and institutional level

Both countries acknowledged that the UK's decision to leave the European Union presented a unique opportunity to take the bilateral education and research relationship to the next level. Ministers agreed to:

- Encourage cooperation at officials level, and between institutions, to develop proposals for higher education and business innovation partnerships on areas of mutual strength.
- Share best practice in the regulation of higher education to ensure the highest standards of teaching and student support.
- Work together to identify complementary research priorities, to encourage greater collaboration between universities and industry in each country and to increase commercialisation opportunities.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration on research infrastructure, including sharing innovation policies relating to identifying emerging trends and international access.

3. Promoting student, staff and researcher mobility

Ministers reiterated a strong commitment to international education, to promoting take-up of two-way mobility between Australia and the UK under existing migration arrangements, and to ensuring the highest possible standards of student care and support. Ministers agreed to:


- Facilitate discussions between departments and relevant bodies to promote two-way student, staff and researcher mobility.
- Promote the high-quality, diverse and innovative education sectors in each country.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration and joint activity between institutions in third countries.

Next Steps

Senior officials are requested to report to Ministers within six months on the progress towards areas of joint action identified in the meeting.

The next meeting will be held in 2018 between senior officials. At this meeting, senior officials will discuss the outcomes of this Communique in detail with a view to further building on the bilateral engagement between Australia and the UK.

Australia and the UK acknowledge that this Communique is not, nor does it intend to be, legally binding.



Signed on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation by:

The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for School Standards



Signed on behalf of the Australian delegation by:

Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training