

Monday 5 September 2022

The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on your election as Leader of the Conservative Party. I am writing to ask that, as the new Prime Minister, your government throws its weight behind the UK's thriving research sector and ensures the UK remains a world leader in the humanities and social sciences.

The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. We champion the [SHAPE](#) disciplines – Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for People and the Economy. Like you, we believe that SHAPE subjects are vital to a broad and rigorous education and [complement learning in STEM subjects like maths at KS5 and beyond](#). SHAPE skills are key to our success as an 80% services economy, and graduates from these disciplines fuel the UK's fastest growing sectors including finance, tech, communications and the creative industries.

Research and development in our disciplines is equally central to the nation's prosperity. The work we fund tackles major societal issues - from boosting economic productivity, to behaviour change to improve energy efficiency, through to how the UK should respond to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. For the UK to remain a globally competitive research superpower and for the health of our economy, we urge you to commit to the following.

First, **we strongly support the Government's priority to associate to Horizon Europe as soon as possible** and urge you to continue to pursue this goal as a top priority. However, in a scenario where the UK is unable to associate it is essential that the [funding set out in the Autumn Budget for Association or replacement programmes is ringfenced and deployed fully](#) to protect and stabilise the UK research and innovation community.

Second, it is vital that your government sends a clear message to investors that the UK is open for business and ready to embrace the opportunities of a changing world. Globally, major counterparts such as Germany, Israel, South Korea and Japan already invest more than 3% of their GDP in R&D. **We ask that you set out a long-term plan for public and private R&D investment**, building on the

Government target to boost overall R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027 to a [longer-term aim of 3% of GDP by 2032](#).

Finally, **we recommend that the science portfolio is reunited with the universities brief and restored to a Cabinet position**, ensuring that the UK's leadership in research and innovation is prioritised at the highest level and supported by the [delivery of high-level skills](#), including those gained from studying SHAPE disciplines. From the diverse careers and new businesses that power our services economy, to the innovations that drive our society forward, the social sciences and humanities are vital to delivering a strong and prosperous future.

You have the opportunity to be the Prime Minister who makes this vision a reality, strengthening the UK's world-leading research base and delivering economic, social and cultural benefits for the whole nation and strengthening Britain's contribution to addressing global challenges. We stand ready to support you, your cabinet and government in your work and to help bring insights from our Fellowship and our disciplines on the policy matters you face. If we can help your office at any time, please contact our Chief Executive Hetan Shah (h.shah@thebritishacademy.ac.uk).

Your sincerely,

Julia Black

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JBlack', written in a cursive style.

President