

A statement from Trinity College Dublin

Trinity College Dublin sees Brexit as both an opportunity and a threat. The biggest concern is that universities in Ireland will be unable to exploit the opportunities.

The three areas where Trinity has identified problems are as follows: Firstly, the inability to recruit leading academics who may want to leave the UK and move to Ireland. At present we lack space to locate new academics, the money to pay them and the flexibility to negotiate salaries for leading academics in their fields. It is naïve to believe that a Nobel prize winner will come to Ireland if he or she cannot be guaranteed both space to work and a salary that competes with salaries offered elsewhere. Universities compete for talent with rival universities across the world and it is important that universities are given the flexibility to compete.

A second problem is the uncertainty over the future of research programmes such as Horizon2020. The successor to this programme will probably be worth around €120bn. It is essential that Irish universities are well placed to compete for projects. Traditionally Trinity and other universities have worked well with universities in Britain and Northern Ireland to win research grants. This could become more difficult if Britain is excluded. It is essential that there is clarity on this and it is highly desirable that Britain remains a member of such research programmes.

Trinity has always placed great emphasis on its role as a university for the entire island of Ireland. This is endangered by the prospect of high fees for students from the North. It is essential that there is clarity before the end of the Brexit talks on both fees and freedom of movement for students.

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