

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM ON THE AGREEMENT ON THE MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AWARDS, TITLES, DIPLOMAS AND ACADEMIC DEGREES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES

TITLE OF AGREEMENT

Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Awards, Titles, Diplomas and Academic Degrees between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United Mexican States.

Command Paper Number: 9095

SUBJECT MATTER

The Agreement represents an undertaking to establish a process for the mutual recognition of Higher Education Awards, Titles, Diplomas and Academic Degrees awarded by officially authorised education systems of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of Mexico.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has responsibility for policy relating to higher education in England. Ministers for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have responsibility for Higher Education in the devolved administrations. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has overall responsibility for UK policy relating to relations with the United States of Mexico.

INTEREST OF THE DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS

The Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Department for Employment and Learning, a Department of the Northern Ireland Executive have seen the Agreement and are content.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Agreement establishes an underpinning framework to increase educational cooperation and mobility between the UK and Mexico through the mutual recognition of our respective education and academic degree systems, by aligning credit structures and quality assurance schemes.

The Agreement is expected to open up a potential market of approximately 150,000 students and lead to a substantial increase in the number of new students eligible to study in the UK with an estimated £25m benefit to the UK annually. Additionally, the Agreement will lead to:

- new collaboration and joint awards between UK and Mexican Universities;
- opportunities to study UK degrees based in Mexico;
- increased research outcomes that benefit both countries;
- increased professor mobility between the two countries; and
- opportunities for UK agencies to provide training and development in the management of cross-country collaboration and quality assurance.

The Agreement was signed by the Government of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of Mexico during the March 2015 State Visit to the United Kingdom of the President of the United Mexican States, His Excellency Mr Enrique Peña Nieto. The State Visit was a highlight of the Year of Mexico in the UK and the Year of the UK in Mexico (the Dual year) which runs throughout 2015. The Dual Year has three strands: (i) arts and the creative economy; ii) education, science and innovation; and iii) trade and investment - where good connections exist currently and where there is potential for growth.

FINANCIAL

Administering the Agreement will not result in significant costs.

RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

None

CONSULTATIONS

The Agreement was negotiated on behalf of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by UK National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) and the British Council and on behalf of the United States of Mexico by the Ministry of Public Education.

IMPLEMENTATION

A Bilateral Technical Committee comprising specialists from the UK and Mexico will be established to finalise the Annexes to the Agreement (including guidelines, adjustments and mechanisms) which will underpin the mutual recognition process. The British Council will convene and manage virtual meetings of the Committee across the UK and Mexico. BIS International Knowledge and Innovation Unit will chair in the UK. Each of the Parties shall notify the other upon completion of their respective internal constitutional and legal procedures required to allow this Agreement to enter into force. The Agreement enters into force ninety (90) days after

the date of receipt of the latter notification. No legislation is required to enable the UK to implement the Agreement.

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

Jo Johnson
Minister of State for Universities and Science