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| **Prof. Claire Honess**Dean of postgraduate research studies |

22 August 2016

**To: Postgraduate Researchers at the University of Leeds**

Dear all

**The EU Referendum and our PGR Community**

It’s now several weeks since the EU Referendum and I know that the result has raised many concerns about the specific uncertainties and difficulties faced by our PGR community. I am writing to offer you my support and reassurance that the University is committed to making sure that Leeds remains a place where our international PGRs are welcomed and appreciated for contributions they make to the University and to the UK.

As the Vice-Chancellor said in his recent [Leader column](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/news/article/5294/Looking_Brexit_in_the_teeth): ‘Universities are more than places of learning and discovery; they are communities in their own right, with their own values and principles. At Leeds we ensure that everyone is treated equally, with fairness, dignity and respect. I want to reassure every member of staff and every student that this will not change. We will continue to build on our reputation as an international University in a compassionate, outward looking city. We welcome the most insightful and enquiring minds, regardless of nationality or jurisdiction.’

This is a statement which I and my colleagues wholeheartedly support, and I thought it would be helpful to let you know about some of the actions and activities taking place within the University to demonstrate that support.

International PGRs may be particularly interested in attending one of two open meetings at which Emma Brooksbank, Head of Immigration at Simpson Millar solicitors, will talk specifically about how the Brexit decision may affect immigration processes and requirements. These are on:

* Tuesday 13 September 10-12pm in Clothworkers Central Building Speakman Lecture Theatre (G.89)
* Thursday 29 September 1.30-3.30pm in the Great Hall.

You can book your place [here](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/news/article/5336/immigration_information_sessions). You will be able to hear the latest information about immigration issues and ask general questions, although Emma will not be able to answer queries about individual circumstances. As the situation becomes clearer and new guidelines and/or legislation emerge, we’ll consider organising similar events in the future.

For advice on practical concerns you can go to the Student Advice Centre in the Students’ Union between 0930 and 1700, visit their [website](https://www.luu.org.uk/helpandadvice/browse/) or contact them on advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk or (0113) 380 1290. The Staff Counselling and Psychological Support Service have also produced a guide – *Coping with change and uncertainty arising out of the Brexit vote –* which is available to [download](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/news/article/5327/coping_with_change_and_uncertainty_arising_out_of_the_brexit_vote?notags=true)*.* We also ensure that the [EU Referendum](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/homepage/390/eu_referendum) page on For Staff is updated regularly. Other useful information can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and the [Universities UK website](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/Pages/brexit-faq.aspx).

The University is supporting the relaunched #WeAreInternational campaign which celebrates the economic and cultural contribution of our international students, staff and partners. Our support is very visible, with the #WeAreInternational banner prominently displayed over the Parkinson Bridge and a series of tweets and post on our social media channels. Student ambassadors and colleagues greeting international students when they arrive have been briefed on the campaign and will be wearing and giving out #WeAreInternational badges.

Our chaplaincy is also running a series of events, such as lunches and campus walks, around the theme of ‘unity’, and we will be publicising these activities – and those organised under the #WeAreInternational umbrella – to make sure that students and staff are aware of when these take place. Of course, we will also be running our annual week-long World Unite festival in February, which celebrates the cultural diversity of all our staff and students.

Finally, specifically in response to the Referendum vote, the Vice-Chancellor has convened an informal group, including staff members, the trade unions and the LUU Executive, that will our responses to decisions and information as they emerge. I sit on this group, along with a PGR rep, so the specific needs of this community are represented, and I am, of course, happy to hear about any specific issues that you’d like me to raise. HR has also set up a group that is working to provide effective ongoing support and communications about Brexit-related issues.

I hope you find the above information helpful and that it reassures you of the University’s commitment to support its international community. Please don’t hesitate to contact me directly if there is anything more that you think I or the University could do at the present time to support you, the PGR community, colleagues and students at Leeds.

With my very best wishes



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