Vice-Chancellors Masterclass: Politics and HE Policy Making in Changing Times  
Wednesday 24 April 2024  
Venue: Central London, 10:00 – 16:00

What you get from this masterclass:

- Time and space in a peer environment to think about deepening political connections and networks whilst engaging in conversations with current and former politicians and civil servants.
- Better placed to both lead yourselves and your institutions to work in a more meaningful way alongside political and government leaders, above and beyond engaging with local MPs.
- Insights on how to engage your boards in this work, thereby ‘sharing the load’.
- Better understand how some of the key issues facing HE leaders are seen by those in policy making and implementation roles; those you will need to engage if the change you seek is to become reality.
- Take away practical ideas and approaches to support impactful engagement with those in the political sphere.

Programme

| 10:00 am | Welcome, introductions and outline of the day  
• Alison Johns, Chief Executive Advance HE  
• Catherine Eden, Managing Director, Eden & Partners |
| 10:10 am | Small group work: time to think through a key issue with which local/national politicians could help. You will be able to test this issue with a range of politicians later this morning. |
| 10:30 am | Labour approach to Higher Education and Research: what would be different and what does Labour need from the sector now, and if elected, in the months post-election?  
• Labour political contributor TBC |
| 11:30 am | Break and networking |
| 11:45 am | Plenary: Working with local MPs and Peers on issues you want to progress – what works and what doesn’t  
• Munira Wilson, MP for Twickenham and Liberal Democrat Education spokesperson  
• Rupa Huq, MP Ealing Central and Acton and former Academic  
• Baroness Smith of Newnham, Liberal Democrat Peer, Academic |
| 12:00 pm | Conversation 1: In small groups, you have the opportunity of a conversation with all three of our parliamentarians in turn to better understand how you might progress the issue you agreed earlier. |
| 12:20 pm | Conversations in small groups |
| 1:00 pm | Lunch and networking |
2:00 pm | Plenary: what have we heard so far?

2:15 pm | **Plenary: Navigating Westminster and Whitehall in the run-up to and post General Election.** What will be incoming Government be looking to the HE sector for pre and post the election? What are the approaches to avoid?

- Rt Hon Lord David Willetts, former Universities Minister; Chancellor, University of Leicester 2018-2023; current Chair, Resolution Foundation and the UK Space Agency
- Stephen Marston, former VC University of Gloucestershire and Director General

3:15 pm | Pulling together the threads: from what we have heard today, what are we taking back to our organisations and what do we need to do collectively?

4:15 pm | Close & optional networking

**Benefits of the programme**

With a general election imminent, any period of change offers a fresh opportunity to engage with those in policy making and implementation roles. This interactive and practical Masterclass will provide VCs with:

- time to think through the opportunities for working constructively with local and national politicians and the civil servants that support them;
- conversations with current and former MPs and Peers, Ministers, civil servants about key issues for the sector, to aid better understanding some of the ‘assumptions’ policy makers make about higher education and what they are looking to the sector’s leaders for;
- an opportunity to test some of the issues with which institutional heads are looking to make progress and receive constructive feedback from the contributors;
- quality thinking and discussion time with colleagues to share experiences of what works in terms of successful engagement with politicians.