



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

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Professor Michael Lockwood
President, Royal Astronomical Society

3 June 2025

Professor Jon Gluyas
President, Geological Society of London
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Our Ref: MC2025-00008835-EJ

Dear Professor Lockwood and Professor Gluyas,

Thank you for your correspondence of 12 May regarding the vulnerability of geophysics degree programmes, also copied to the Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern PC.

The government is aware of concerns regarding the financial sustainability of certain university departments and the resulting decisions to close or restructure some academic courses. While such decisions are made by autonomous institutions, we recognise that they often reflect wider financial pressures across the higher education sector.

I note the concerns raised about the future of geophysics degree programmes, among others, and the potential implications for the availability of specialist skills and expertise. While it is for universities to determine their academic offerings, I understand the importance of maintaining a diverse and responsive higher education landscape that can adapt to the evolving needs of students and employers.

The government remains committed to supporting a strong and sustainable university sector. As part of this commitment, we will set out our plans for higher education reform in the forthcoming Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, expected in summer 2025.

I will continue to engage with the sector and relevant stakeholders to understand the challenges facing strategically important disciplines and to consider appropriate responses.

Thank you again for your correspondence, I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Vallance
Minister of State for Science, Research and Innovation

