

Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair
Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

The Russell Group of Universities
One Great George Street
London SW1P 3AA
T +44 (0)20 3816 1300
russellgroup.ac.uk

22 March 2021

Dear Mr Tugendhat,

Thank you for your letter of 18th March regarding the Foreign Affairs Committee's inquiry into the Xinjiang detention camps.

Our universities are working proactively with technical agencies, government departments, and sector bodies to mitigate emerging risks relating to international collaborations, including those outlined in your letter. The Russell Group treats these issues as a matter of priority and in recent months we have:

- Hosted roundtable discussions, including with the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI), to discuss emerging risks relating to universities' international partnerships;
- Engaged with the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office to help with the proposed expansion of the Academic Technology Approval Scheme;
- Networked members with the Professional Association for Research Managers (ARMA) to encourage the sharing of best-practice and resources relating to due diligence and international partnerships.

Additionally, we are planning a series of roundtables with other government departments and technical agencies, including those who process export licenses for transactions that may involve military or 'dual use' technologies.

In October, following extensive consultation with Government departments across Whitehall, UUK produced sector guidance to help universities combat risks relating to international partnerships. On the basis of this guidance, our members have curtailed some international partnerships early, and have accelerated work to enhance internal policies and processes relating to the protection of sensitive research, academic freedom, and the screening of international partnerships.

We will continue to facilitate vital behind-the-scenes discussions between members and the relevant Government actors. While the Russell Group secretariat itself does not have the expertise to give advice on legal matters relating to international partnerships, our members will have in-house experts to provide legal advice.

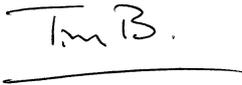
RUSSELL

University of Birmingham
University of Bristol
University of Cambridge
Cardiff University
Durham University
University of Edinburgh
University of Exeter
University of Glasgow
Imperial College London
King's College London
University of Leeds
University of Liverpool
London School of Economics
and Political Science
University of Manchester
Newcastle University
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
Queen Mary University of London
Queen's University Belfast
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
University College London
University of Warwick
University of York

GROUP

I understand that my office has been in touch with you to arrange a meeting post-Easter recess for myself and a small number of Vice-Chancellors. I look forward to meeting with you then to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim B." with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Tim Bradshaw
Chief Executive, Russell Group



Foreign Affairs Committee

House of Commons · London · SW1A 0AA
+44 20 7219 6106 · fac@parliament.uk
www.parliament.uk · [@CommonsForeign](https://twitter.com/CommonsForeign)

From the Chair
Tom Tugendhat MP

Dr Tim Bradshaw
Chief Executive
The Russell Group

Letter by email: CEO.office@russellgroup.ac.uk

18 March 2021

Dear Dr Bradshaw,

I am contacting you as part of the Foreign Affairs Committee's inquiry into the Xinjiang detention camps. I have heard reports that various UK universities are engaged in research partnerships or collaboration with Chinese organisations that are complicit with the identity-based persecution of the Uyghurs and other minority groups in Xinjiang.

I understand that Russell Group universities have sought to form extensive links with China and its universities across different disciplines and areas of activity, especially with the China 9, the alliance of nine elite universities in Mainland China. While international research collaboration is of great benefit to our knowledge economy, we also have a responsibility to ensure that it does not directly or indirectly lead to UK universities being complicit in atrocities.

I am concerned that Russell Group universities may not have adequate policies in place to safeguard against the potential harmful appropriation of research by malign actors. With this in mind, I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions:

- What advice has the Russell Group given to its member organisations about ethical screening processes for their international work to ensure no involved parties are implicated in human rights abuses?
- What advice has the Russell Group given to its member organisations about how to judge whether any resultant research will not have applications that could be used for persecution?
- What due diligence work has the Russell Group done to be able to advise on strategy and policy development to its member organisations specifically in relation to Xinjiang?
- What support could the UK Government offer to bodies like the Russell Group so that it can give more effective advice on strategy and policy development to its member organisations undertaking international work?

It would be helpful to have a response by 1 April. I intend to place your response in the public domain.

Best wishes,

TOM TUGENDHAT