



Arts & Humanities Alliance

<http://artsandhums.org/>

10 June 2020

To the Right Honourable Dominic Raab MP,

We write as Co-Chairs of the Arts and Humanities Alliance, a body representing more than 50 learned societies and subject associations across the United Kingdom, to ask on behalf of our membership that you reconsider the proposed funding cuts to the British Council.

For over 80 years, the British Council has played a major international role in fostering and developing cultural relationships, supporting mobility and initiating transnational partnerships of strategic importance. For example, among our activities with the British Council, in 2015 Martin Halliwell led on a community-facing project, sponsored by the British Council in collaboration with an Indian university partner, which traced urban migration stories between the Gujarat region and the UK. And last year Martin, as Arts and Humanities Alliance Co-Chair, attended a strategically important British Council roundtable at the House of Commons on the special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States.

The work of the British Council is vital for developing a sense of global citizenship and helping to equip students with the language and intercultural skills they need to thrive in a globalized economic and social landscape, ensuring that the UK remains globally competitive at a time when language skills are more necessary than ever. Because the British Council plays an irreplaceable role in promoting cultural exchange and study abroad opportunities, we would appeal to the government to protect its funding at all costs.

Various national benchmarks evidence the vital social and economic importance of humanities and social science subjects that British Council actively helps to promote. The British Academy's 2017 publication *The Right Skills: Celebrating Skills in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, concludes "the UK must ... invest in [the] high-level skills" offered by these subjects "which are crucial for the jobs of the future, the UK economy, and ensuring that our graduates ... can flourish in a global marketplace". This is evidenced further by a new British Academy report *Qualified for the Future: Quantifying Demand for Arts, Humanities and Social Science Skills* that demonstrates the economic benefit of promoting international education to prepare graduates for a spectrum of professions with unique opportunities for social and global mobility.

For these reasons, we are joining with the University Council of Modern Languages to appeal to the UK government to both protect and strengthen funding for the British Council. If we can be of help within this review process then we would be very happy to be involved.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Martin Halliwell, University of Leicester

Professor Susan Bruce, Keele University