

2026 Annual Conference

Student life in an age of populism, technological change and geopolitical tension

Sponsored by TechnologyOne and Kortext

Thursday 11 June 2026

One Great George Street, London, SW1P 3AA

9.30am – 3pm

Agenda (*subject to change*)

9.30am	Registration and coffee
10am	Opening Keynote: The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister for Skills Chair: Nick Hillman OBE, Director, HEPI
10.20am	Q&A
10.30am	What might a populist government mean for universities? Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vivienne Stern, CEO, Universities UK• Sophie Stowers, Research Manager, More in Common• Professor Bobby Duffy, Director, The Policy Institute at King's College London Chair: Nick Hillman OBE, Director, HEPI
10.50am	Q&A
11.05am	What does technological change mean for students, universities and employers? Speakers:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Rakesh Patel, Professor of Medical Education, St Mary's University London • Cheryl Watson, VP Education, UK, TechnologyOne • Anila DeHart, Advisor & Researcher, Education–Workforce Coordination <p>Chair: Mary Curnock Cook CBE, HEPI Trustee</p>
11.20am	Q&A
11.35am	Refreshment break
12.05pm	<p>Launch of the findings from the <i>2026 Student Academic Experience Survey</i></p> <p>Speakers: Jonathan Neves, Head of Research & Surveys, Advance HE, Rose Stephenson, Director of Policy and Strategy, HEPI and Charlotte Armstrong, Policy Manager, HEPI</p>
12.20pm	Q&A
12.35pm	<p>Panel session on the student experience</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex Stanley, Vice President Higher Education, National Union of Students • Professor Dame Sally Mapstone, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of St Andrews • Dr Gosia Turner, Head of Surveys, Jisc <p>Chair: Rose Stephenson, Director of Policy and Strategy, HEPI</p>
12.50pm	Q&A
1pm	Lunch
1.50pm	Introduction from James Gray, Chief Executive, Kortext
2pm	<p>Afternoon Keynote: <i>From Cheese and Wine to the Frontline - 40 years reporting the worlds conflicts</i></p> <p>Christina Lamb OBE, Chief Foreign Correspondent, Sunday Times</p>

	Chair: Nick Hillman OBE, Director, HEPI
2.20pm	Q&A
2.30pm	Rose Stephenson 'In Conversation' with Josh Fleming, Interim Chief Executive at the Office for Students
2.50pm	Q&A
3pm	Conference closes