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Our ref: PS

13 October 2016

Dear Lord Stern,

### **Next Steps: Implementing the Review of The Research Excellence Framework**

Thank you for publishing the outcome of your Review of the Research Excellence Framework in July. The report recognises the advantage that our world class research base brings to the UK and the key role that our universities play in delivering high-quality teaching and excellent research, driving productivity and economic growth.

You and your steering group have provided carefully considered insights and recommendations which clearly set out how we can build on the strengths of previous research assessments and reduce the burdens on academics, to ensure we retain our global leadership in ground-breaking research.

The government has welcomed this important report. I have reiterated my full commitment to the principle of supporting excellence in research and to the dual support system, and your review has reaffirmed that the REF is a critical UK-wide exercise which underpins this. I have agreed with Devolved colleagues on next steps for implementing the Review.

Your review set out clear principles and directions for reform which now need to be turned into specific and detailed practical arrangements for the next REF. I have asked the Higher Education Funding Council for England to work together with other HE funding bodies to develop detailed proposals which take forward the recommendations from the Review, including any further testing and piloting of aspects that may be required during the process of implementing the proposals.

The HE funding bodies will consult the HE sector on the proposals for the next Research Excellence Framework exercise this Autumn. This will provide the HE sector across the UK with the opportunity to offer their input to the development of detailed arrangements, and will provide the clarity that the sector desires on the arrangements for the next REF

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Johnson', written in a cursive style.

**JO JOHNSON MP**