



Curtin International

GPO Box U1987  
Perth Western Australia 6845

Web [curtin.edu.au](http://curtin.edu.au)

17 February 2017

Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

### **Inquiry into Australia's trade and investment relationship with the United Kingdom.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into Australia's trade and investment relationship with the United Kingdom.

Curtin University is one of Western Australia's largest and most culturally diverse universities, with approximately one third of our international students from a country outside Australia. As a leading global university, we strive to research and educate in ways that address international issues and challenges.

We would like to comment on the future of Australia's relationship with the United Kingdom in the context of our recently developed strategic alliance with the University of Aberdeen.

### **Opportunities to expand trade and investment links.**

Curtin University would like to provide a summary of the current activities underway in relation to developing relationships with the UK, and provide our recommendation for further investment by the state and federal governments into the development of linkages and strategic alliances between Australian and UK universities.

Curtin University works in partnership with a number of UK universities to offer student mobility and collaborative research opportunities. These partnerships include active student exchange agreements between Curtin University and Middlesex University, The University of Reading, The University of Liverpool, The University of Birmingham, The City University London, Loughborough University, University of Hertfordshire, Heriot-Watt University, University of Essex, University of Leeds, Robert Gordon University, Oxford Brookes University and the University of East Anglia, in addition to a Fieldwork Agreement with The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

Aside from these partnerships, in 2017, Curtin University has formed a strategic alliance with the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, UK. In 2015, Curtin University first signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Aberdeen. This is a relationship that has strengthened into the creation of the strategic Aberdeen-Curtin Alliance with an Agreement to this effect signed in February 2017.

Founded in 1495, The University of Aberdeen is one of the oldest universities in the world and is internationally recognised for its expertise in Energy, Medicine, Business, Nutrition and Divinity. The University of Aberdeen pioneered discoveries that have changed thinking about Medicine, Science, Arts and Humanities over five centuries. It is situated in the heart of the UK's oil and gas industry, the city of Aberdeen.

Curtin University is the largest university in Western Australia with an international reputation for expertise in Minerals and Energy, Health, and ICT and Emerging Technologies. It is located in a city set to be the largest exporter of liquefied gas in the world.

The Aberdeen-Curtin Alliance draws on the complementary strengths of both universities to deliver high-impact research and innovative teaching programs across four themes of mutual interest: Engineering and Energy, Medicine and Health Sciences, Creative Arts, and Business.

In 2017, the Alliance already has twelve significant joint research projects underway;

1. Energy and Engineering - Understanding the Decommissioning Landscape.
2. Creative Arts - Negotiating Cultural Identity in Contemporary Australian and Scottish Short Fiction.
3. Creative Arts - Haunted by Use; Theories and Aesthetic Uses of Post-Industrial Space and Place.
4. Energy and Engineering - Listening Through Rock Salt; Quantifying petrofabrics and seismic velocity anisotropy of evaporates to improve seismic imaging.
5. Energy and Engineering - Development of a Theoretical Strategy for Designing Titania Nanoparticles for Photocatalysis for Water Purification and Wastewater Treatment.
6. Health Sciences and Medicine - Campylobacter Jejuni Biofilm Structure and Cell Dispersal.
7. Engineering - Thermal Enhancement of Nanofluids.
8. Engineering - Vibration Based Structural Health Monitoring and Damage Detection in Subsea Risers.
9. Engineering - Efficient Biomass Upgrading Technology.
10. Creative Writing - Literatures of Travel AND/OR Ideas and Representations of Wilderness.
11. Business - Empirical modelling of crude oil prices under consideration of the relationship with other financial markets and the role of financialisation.
12. Health - The Role of Macromolecular Crowding in Protein Translation.

The success of the collaborative PhD program is projected to support 36 PhD students on a full scholarship to undertake a jointly supervised research project by 2019. To highlight the global benefits of the joint research produced by the Curtin-Aberdeen Alliance, an example from the current research underway in Energy and Engineering is the *Understanding the decommissioning landscape* project that presents the opportunity to understand both mature and aging fields (North Sea) alongside a younger profile (Australia) in understanding the risks and uncertainties in the decommissioning process of exploited oil and gas sites. The Alliance will also create new teaching programs in strategic areas, more opportunities for student and staff mobility, closer connections with industry, and enhanced research capabilities to provide innovative solutions to global problems.

The establishment of the Global Energy Institute (GEI), to be launched in 2017, will be a key pillar to the alliance. The GEI will capitalise on the considerable strengths of both universities in the fields of oil, gas and renewables and provide an internationally recognised hub for delivering world-class research and education programs. Building on the University of Aberdeen's existing links with Africa and Europe, and Curtin's extensive presence in Asia, the GEI will deliver elite energy-related research, education and ongoing professional development. Through the GEI, Aberdeen and Curtin will collaborate in transnational education, energy-related taught postgraduate programs, higher degree by research training, continuing professional development programs, research programs and, government and industry engagement.

The research priorities of the GEI are targeting; geophysics; smart grids; renewable and low emissions energy; CO2 utilisation; biofuels; carbon capture and storage; petroleum engineering; subsea research; sustainable cities; energy law; energy economics; and energy storage and fuel cells.

The Aberdeen-Curtin Alliance will offer many benefits including;

- Attractive programs for prospective global students to drive coursework and research enrolments.
- Joint academic appointments.
- The GEI will attract high quality students from across the globe.
- Enhanced global reputation and international market positioning of both universities and cities through the research outcomes and industry linkages.
- Use of joint resources to access regions of the world that are of strategic importance.
- Sharing of skills, facilities and equipment to enhance knowledge and drive excellence in research.

The universities plan to work together on joint transnational education projects, which will have a greater impact in global markets and be attractive to international students wanting a unique education with two globally recognised universities. With Curtin's existing transnational presence in Singapore, Malaysia and Mauritius, and Aberdeen's in South Korea, the alliance opens doors to work together on new joint transnational projects in geographic areas of strategic interest.

The United Kingdom is home to a number of globally recognised universities with resources and industry connections that if aligned appropriately with Australian universities and industry, will provide mutual benefits to both. Enhanced investment and support into the global expansion of Australian universities through links with UK institutions provides the opportunity to develop world class research, strategic student mobility experiences and the scope to build a greater market presence and reputation in international education and related industries for Australia.

Curtin University highly values the Aberdeen-Curtin Alliance and sees this linkage with a highly reputable university, such as the University of Aberdeen, as a key part of its global strategy. Curtin University would like to request the committee to take into regards these insights in future planning and welcome the opportunity to provide further information to the committee as required.