**Electoral agenda**

We must press politicians to show how a future government will support the sector, says Christopher Snowden

With the general election only 14 months away, we are already seeing the political skilsmanship that mark the start of campaigning. This election is likely to be won, or lost, on voters’ decisions about who they trust to run the economy. The Conservatives will want to focus on determined efforts to reduce the deficit and on the evidence of a growing economy, Labour on the “cost of living” and on the unequal distribution of growth. Universities are central to the UK’s economic performance. They produce the highly skilled workforce and citizens of the future. Their research drives economic growth. They create jobs and innovation. If politicians focus on the importance of the economy, they must demonstrate that they can be trusted with our universities.

In the run-up to the election, we need to make clear why universities matter, and how they unlock human potential and are crucial to the success of business and public services. Their research generates knowledge; they educate future leaders; they are crucial to the success of business and public services. In the run-up to the election, we need to make clear why universities matter, and how they unlock human potential and are crucial to the success of business and public services. Their research generates knowledge; they educate future leaders; they are crucial to the success of business and public services.

Christopher Snowden is president of Universities UK.