



Sir Vince Cable with Northumbria University Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Professor Andy Long

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Former Liberal Democrat leader visits Northumbria University

Students from Northumbria University had the opportunity to meet and question the former leader of the Liberal Democrats Sir Vince Cable when he visited the North East last week.

Undergraduate Mass Communication students and undergraduate degree apprentices and postgraduate higher apprentices within leadership and management took part in roundtable discussions with Sir Vince, covering everything from the relationship between the media and politics to

governance within the public and private sector.

Sir Vince also met with Northumbria's Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Professor Andy Long, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Tom Lawson to discuss the University's leading role within the region in promoting social mobility and regional economic growth.

Around 40 per cent of Northumbria's students come from areas with low rates of participation in higher education, and its graduates fill almost a quarter of highly skilled jobs in the North East of England, providing a pipeline of highly skilled graduates into the region's economy.

Having been the Member of Parliament for Twickenham for over 20 years, including serving as Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills within the coalition government from 2010 to 2015, Sir Vince was able to share his considerable experience with the students during his visit to Northumbria.

He also used the opportunity to address current challenges facing UK universities, including a steep drop in the number of international students coming to the UK following government changes to immigration restrictions.

Sir Vince, who oversaw the lifting of the cap on student tuition fees in England under the coalition government in 2010, said: "The immediate financial pressures on UK universities come from completely unnecessary restrictions on overseas students, who actually make a great contribution to the British university system, both financially and intellectually.

"I had to bite the bullet on student tuition fees 15 years ago, but since then they have not kept up with the cost of higher education and universities are really under the cosh financially.

"British universities generally, and this one in particular, are very high quality – it's one of the things Britain does really well.

"I was very impressed with the curiosity of the students – they asked some very well-informed questions."

Speaking about Sir Vince's visit, Northumbria University Vice-Chancellor

Professor Andy Long said: “At Northumbria we aim to embed experiential learning into all our programmes – connecting the theory and knowledge learned in the classroom to real-world situations.

“With his knowledge of politics, business and higher education, Sir Vince was able to provide invaluable insight for the students he met here today, and we are very grateful to him for answering their questions and sharing his experiences.”

Sir Vince’s visit to Northumbria was organised by [Dr Deborah Burns](#), who leads the University’s [Mass Communication BA \(Hons\) programme](#) and is also a Newcastle City Council Liberal Democrat councillor for the Manor Park ward.

Speaking about the value to her students of the visit, Dr Burns said: “Sir Vince’s visit provided an invaluable opportunity for our students to engage with someone who has first-hand experience of working with both politicians and the media at the very highest levels in our country.

“I’ve no doubt the insight they gained from this discussion has enhanced their understanding of the field immensely.”

Sir Vince also spoke to undergraduate and postgraduate students from across Northumbria’s suite of [Business Degree Apprenticeships](#).

[Dr Helen Charlton](#), Head of Executive Education at the University’s Newcastle Business School, who manages the business apprenticeships programmes, said: “The round table not only helped to develop our students’ understanding of public and private sector challenges, but also exemplified the invaluable role such visits play in our business apprenticeship curriculum.”

Sir Vince’s visit to Northumbria University was part of a wider tour of the North East, timed to coincide with the upcoming North East Mayoral Combined Authority election, taking place tomorrow.

As well as spending time at Northumbria, Sir Vince also visited the Hitachi factory at Newton Aycliffe and joined Liberal Democrat Mayoral candidate

Aidan King canvassing across Newcastle.

[Find out more about Business and Workforce development events and opportunities taking place at Northumbria University.](#)

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Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk

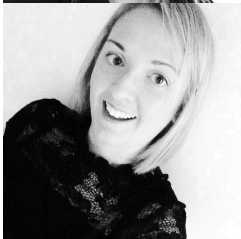


Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk