Dear Chief Executive

**Simple measure to help students access education online**

I am looking for your help in removing barriers that can keep people studying in higher and further education from learning remotely.

The issues I want to tackle are widely reported, including Sir Michael Barber’s [digital teaching and learning review](#) showing 30% of higher education (HE) students lack good enough internet access while learning online and Jisc’s [Student Digital Insights](#) survey finding that 62% of students experience poor Wi-Fi connection and 22% struggle with mobile data costs.

Improving digital access for students is a priority for me and why I wrote earlier this year to the Office for Students, as the regulator for HE providers in England, making it very clear that universities should ensure all students regardless of their background have the resources to study remotely.

The Government has invested over £400 million to help provide laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people so they can access education and social care services remotely. As part of this, we have provided devices for care leavers, including those who may be studying at university.

Longer-term improvement in digital access for university and college students is also a priority for me given that a high proportion of HE students and nearly all FE students do not reside on campus.
Request of you

As the head of a Local Authority already making use of govroam, I am asking you to join the effort in supporting learners and researchers in your area by adding eduroam to your existing Wi-Fi network, at no extra charge.

Eduroam is a secure, global roaming service developed for the education community, giving students easy access to connectivity from any device across a higher education campus and when visiting other participating institutions. The requirements for setting up eduroam are very similar to those for govroam, with a simple onboarding process that can usually be completed in a few hours, and potentially only a small internal infrastructure cost associated with adding eduroam.

Once enabled, you can broadcast eduroam wherever you choose across your estate. While restrictions are in place, eduroam can support socially distanced learning in spaces such as public libraries, leisure centres, and outdoor areas like parks and plazas. This will give easier access to roaming connectivity for many more students and researchers in your region at this critical time and into the future.

Leveraging your experience of setting up govroam, eduroam can be quickly enabled meaning:

- Account holders from the eduroam community can seamlessly access your guest network using their pre-existing personal credentials. This community includes all students and staff in higher education, one-third of those in further education and the teams at around 20 major research institutions.
- You can offer guest connectivity to students and staff from the education sector and research professionals, without having to manage guest accounts or increase demand on your IT Support Desk.
- You do not need to collect any personal data from your eduroam-enabled guests, meaning you can offer them connectivity in a GDPR-friendly way.
- You get the reassurance that those connecting via eduroam have been authenticated in real time by their organisation, and that they will be held to a shared standard of behaviour while connected.

There may be some minor costs incurred, depending on the set-up of your digital infrastructure.

Next steps

I urge you to ask your Chief Information Officer or Director of IT to contact Jisc, the UK's digital body for education and research, at: help@jisc.ac.uk so they can support you onboarding eduroam to your system alongside govroam. Jisc has contacted the IT managers of your organisation to explain the onboarding process, in support of this letter.

I thank you in advance for your help in making this happen.
Yours sincerely

Michelle Donelan MP
Minister of State for Universities