



In partnership with



# UK ACADEMIC SALON 2020 REPORT

NOTE SPEAKERS  
DISCUSSIONS

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 2 Introduction
- 3 Keynote speakers
- 4 Research excellence
- 5 5G and research
- 6 Creating innovation
- 7 International collaboration



Photos: Huawei; Imperial College London; iStock

**Victor Zhang, vice-president, Huawei Technologies**

Victor Zhang's keynote illustrated the importance of innovation to Huawei's history and how the pursuit of new technologies and systems remains a guiding principal for the company. Huawei's commitment to research and development manifested itself in its investments, said Mr Zhang, with the company now employing more than 80,000 people in R&D.

"Our investments in R&D have grown by over 30 per cent last year," he said, with more than \$20 billion (£16.35 billion) allocated to R&D investment in 2020. Finding common causes with like-minded academic institutions was key, and Mr

UK nurtured and safeguarded innovation, and maintained its fruitful international collaborations.

"Collaboration which is not politicised, which is driven by the new knowledge creation above all else, is vital to all our futures," he said. That sentiment echoed in the subsequent panel talks, and in Sir Kenneth Olisa's closing remarks.

A non-executive director at Huawei, Sir Kenneth said that 5G was "a technological step-change with the potential to have an impact on society equal to or greater than the internet" but cautioned that politics and competition between nations must not be allowed to limit its potential.

**Ensuring the UK remains a world leader  
in research excellence**

**THE PANEL**

**John Gill**, editor, Times Higher Education  
(moderator)

**Sarah Main**, executive director, Campaign  
for Science and Engineering (CaSE)

**Joe Marshall**, chief executive, National

## How can technology and innovation address a global health crisis?

### THE PANEL

**Sarah Custer**, digital editor,  
Times Higher Education (moderator)

**Sebastien Ourselin**, head of school, School  
of Biomedical Engineering and Imaging  
Science, King's College London

**Geraint Rees**, pro-vice provost (AI), dean of  
the Faculty of Life Sciences, UCL

**Olga Kostopoulou**, reader in medical  
decision making, Imperial College London

Geraint Rees noted that, during the Covid-19 crisis, AI was facilitating activities such as online grocery shopping and load balancing for broadband networks, but older technologies such as apps have been at the forefront of our response. Sebastien Ourselin argued that this was data-related.

Citing Kings' College London's challenges when developing its symptom tracking app, Professor Ourselin said that "federated learning" – where machine learning trains algorithms to interrogate data across multiple decentralised sources – was needed to seed innovation.

The Covid-19 crisis had changed the way doctors see patients, said Olga



Huawei Technologies is delighted to be working  
in partnership with *Times Higher Education* to produce a

