

The Secretary of State has approved the appointment of Venki Ramakrishnan as a Board Member of the British Library.

News story

Venki Ramakrishnan has been approved by The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as a Board Member of the British Library, following his nomination by the Trustees of the British Museum, for a four-year period from 15 June 2020 to 14 June 2024.



Venki Ramakrishnan is a senior scientist at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, where he and others determined the precise atomic structure of the ribosome, the enormous molecular complex that reads our genes to make the proteins they specify. The work also showed how many antibiotics work by blocking bacterial ribosomes, which could help to design better antibiotics. For this work, he shared the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Since 2015, Ramakrishnan has been president of the Royal Society, one of the oldest scientific organizations in the world, and in this role has been a leading voice for British science.

Ramakrishnan is also the author of a popular memoir, *Gene Machine*, which tells about the quest for the structure of the ribosome and also describes in very frank terms what it is like to be an outsider who found himself in the middle of a race for an important problem. It is a frank look at the process of science with its mixture of insights and persistence as well as blunders and dead ends, and how scientists behave, with their mixture of competition and collaboration, their egos, insecurities and jealousies, but also their kindness and generosity.

This role is remunerated at £9130 per annum. One member of the British Library Board is nominated by the Trustees of the British Museum. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is

defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Mr Ramakrishnan has not declared any activity.

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ESFA Update: 1 July 2020

Information latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19) Reminder the deadline to apply to the provider relief scheme (July – October 2020) is Thursday 9 July Information reducing burdens on educational and care settings from the Department for Education and its agencies Information consultation response on subcontracting post-16 education and training with ESFA funding Information supporting redundant apprentices Information eligibility rules for EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals for access to FE 19+ and apprenticeships Information updated college financial benchmarking tool Information joint statement from the ESFA, AoC, and AELP on strengthening relationships and enhancing communications between training providers and the agency Information Department for Education Sustainability Award

Flexible furlough scheme starts today

- from today businesses can bring furloughed employees back to work on a part time basis
- firms will be given the flexibility to decide the hours and shift patterns of their employees – with the government continuing to pay 80% of salaries for the hours they do not work
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has so far helped protect more than 9.3 million jobs

The government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has so far helped protect more than 9.3 million jobs through the pandemic, with employers claiming more than £25.5 billion to support wages.

The scheme will remain open until the end of October and will continue to support jobs and business in a measured way as people return to work, our economy reopens and the country moves to the next stage of its recovery.

From today, a month earlier than previously announced, employers will have the flexibility to bring furloughed employees back to work on a part time basis.

Individual firms will decide the hours and shift patterns their employees will work on their return, so that they can decide on the best approach for

them – and will be responsible for paying their wages while in work.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Our number one priority has always been to protect jobs and businesses through this outbreak. The furlough scheme, which will have been open for eight months by October, has been a lifeline for millions of people and as our economy reopens we want that support to continue.

Giving firms the flexibility to bring back furloughed workers on a part-time basis will help them work gradually and help them plan for the months ahead.

From August, the level of government grant provided through the job retention scheme will be slowly tapered to reflect that people will be returning to work. Businesses will be asked to contribute a modest share, but crucially individuals will continue to receive that 80% of salary covering the time they are unable to work.

More information about the changes can be found [here](#).

The government has also announced that businesses who no longer need the CJRS grants they previously claimed have the option to voluntarily return them.

This is in direct response to employers asking how they can return grants voluntarily – and businesses are under no obligation to do this, but should contact HMRC if they want to pay the grant back.

Companies across the UK who are bringing back furloughed staff today include The Drury Tea and Coffee Company, and Yes Energy Solutions.

Marco Olmi, Managing Director of London-based international coffee wholesaler The Drury Tea and Coffee Company, said:

The ability to bring our staff out of furlough in a flexible manner will be enormously beneficial as the industry eases out of lockdown. Without this flexibility we would really struggle to cope as we endeavour to grow turnover back to something approaching normal levels whilst trying to keep a lid on short-term costs.

Duncan McCombie, CEO of Yes Energy Solutions, said:

The approach lets us to better manage a fluctuating workload, where those working are doing some additional hours. The flexibility will allow us all to better balance the pressure on those working, support childcare responsibilities and a ease in a return to work after 100 days for those furloughed. A great addition to the options available for business leaders.

Reforms set to boost early language outcomes and cut workload

Reception teachers will benefit from a cut in unnecessary paperwork giving them more time to support children's early development, the Department for Education has confirmed in its response to a consultation proposing reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

More than 2,000 early years professionals responded to the consultation about revised early learning goals – key measures teachers use to check children's development at the end of the Reception year – with a consistent view that they were clear and would contribute to a well-rounded assessment.

A focus on language and vocabulary development, as well as teaching numbers in maths, was welcomed – equipping children with important skills as they begin their school journey.

The Department for Education has also confirmed today, Wednesday 1 July, that disadvantaged and vulnerable pre-school aged children will receive additional support as they transition back into early education. Grants worth more than £1 million over six months will go to national early years voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations including National Children's Bureau, Early Years Alliance and Pacey.

Education Minister Nick Gibb said:

It is encouraging to see that many Reception teachers and early years staff welcome our plans to reduce time spent on unnecessary paperwork and help them spend more time interacting with pupils in the classroom. These reforms will strengthen the teaching practice and improve pupils' vocabulary and reading as they move into Year 1 and beyond.

We will be rolling out these improvements to the whole early years sector from September 2021 and will continue working closely with nurseries and schools so that these positive changes keep driving up the standard of early education across the country.

The VCS grants will be targeted at improving outcomes for children most at risk of falling behind by the age of five, and will increase the support for young children with special education needs.

The Department for Education has also confirmed the [Hungry Little Minds](#) website – an online tool for parents and carers that includes tips to support

children aged 0 to five with their learning at home – will be zero-rated by the major mobile providers, meaning that parents won't use up their mobile data allowance if they browse the site from their smartphone.

Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford said:

Nurseries, childminders and pre-schools have remained open to many children throughout the pandemic, providing reassurance and continuity to the youngest children during an uncertain time. The early years of a child's education are crucial and it is vital now more than ever that we work with the sector and with parents to get children back on track.

That is why we are working with early years organisations as part of a wider effort to make sure no child falls behind, partnering with experts to help them catch up from any time missed in their formal education. We're also making it easier for parents, no matter their background or income level, to access online resources that help them to support their children's learning at home.

The reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage follow the Government's commitment to improve the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) in response to the Primary Assessment consultation in September 2017.

Today's consultation response confirms that local authorities will no longer be required to externally moderate the EYFS Profile within schools when the measures become statutory from September 2021, reducing the burden on teachers to gather extensive evidence of a pupil's development and allowing them to spend more time interacting with pupils. It builds on pilot findings published last year, where teachers found changes largely positive, with feedback that it helped focus on stories, group work and discussion, inspiring pupils to be more imaginative and improving their language skills. The improvements also resulted in a reduction in paperwork which lead to a better focus on supporting their pupils' education.

Reception classes have been invited to bring in the EYFS reforms a year early if appropriate, marking a further step in cutting teacher workload and boosting early language development.

Professor Dame Alison Peacock, Chief Executive of the Chartered College of Teaching, said:

The Chartered College of Teaching welcomes these reforms. It is vital that teachers and early years colleagues are free to spend the majority of their time focussing on leading learning rather than constantly tracking and monitoring progress for external moderation purposes.

Dr Julian Grenier, Headteacher at Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre, said:

I think it's important for the sector to take hold of the opportunities these reforms offer us. Reducing the workload around the EYFS Profile will enable practitioners to focus their assessment work where it's most needed. That's for children in danger of falling behind the majority, and children who may have barriers to their learning.

This is an opportunity for schools to think about their early years curriculum, and what they want children to learn, experience and enjoy, rather than focusing on assessment data. The key to giving children better and more equal life-chances is to strengthen the profession in the early years. I hope that colleagues will seize this opportunity to put less emphasis on generating 'data' on more on developing a stronger and better-trained workforce.

Tiffnie Harris, primary specialist at the Association of School and College Leaders, said:

We support this new approach to early learning because it will remove the administrative burden of external moderation and give our fantastic early years teachers more time to interact with children. Early years education is so important for future outcomes, and it is a key to narrowing the attainment gap between rich and poor. We very much welcome the focus on this vital phase.

Jan Dubiel, specialist in Early Childhood Education, said:

Recent events have been a stark reminder of how unpredictable the world can be. As educators and policy makers concerned with early years care and education, we have a duty to ensure that we are preparing children to be knowledgeable, skilled, resilient and creative to manage and succeed in the future that they will face.

We are all committed to providing the most effective and up to date provision for children that will ensure this. The review of the Statutory Educational Programmes, Early Learning Goals and EYFS Profile provides us with a timely opportunity to reflect on, update and refine key aspects of the EYFS.

UK – Turkmenistan sustainable economic cooperation

World news story

Ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan.



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Yesterday Her Majesty's Ambassador to Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr Hugh Philpott signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr Ezizgeldi Annamammedov.

The document will further enhance bilateral trade relations and facilitate cooperation on sustainable economic development between the two countries with the backing of UK Export Finance.

After the signing ceremony the two sides discussed the projects on the bilateral agenda and agreed to work towards realisation of those in the near future.

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