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Higher Education Funding Council for England





Funding and the voice of the student: Higher Education in England

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Main events in 2010-11

- Publication of the Independent Review of HE funding and student finance by Lord Browne (October)
- Comprehensive Spending Review (October)
- Willetts' statement on HE (November)
- Tuition fee vote in Parliament and House of Lords (December)
- HEFCE Grant letter for 2011-12 (December)
- White Paper on future strategy of HE (Spring 2011)
- New funding regime in place for academic year 2012-13

Shape of T-funding 2012-13 onwards

- Highly controlled market → Open market with student choice as main driver?
- HEFCE as main funder → Student as main funder
- Tuition fees of £3,290 → Most tuition fees between £6,000 and £9,000?
- £4.7bn teaching funding → Less in 2012-13, and then further reductions
- Broad-brush block grant → Targeted funding
- HEIs/ private providers → Level playing field

HEFCE grant letter for 2011-12

2011-12

- 6% reduction in teaching funding (to £4.6bn)
- Controlling the number of entrants into the system remains a priority
- Widening participation, retention and fair access and provision for Strategically Important and Vulnerable subjects remain policy priorities

2012-13

- Greater emphasis on student choice
- New cohort brings funding directly with them
- May be new providers accessing public funding
- Potential for greater diversity of providers, but similar student numbers

How might student attitudes change?

- Fee paying environment – HE a significant investment and debt
- Greater expectations: for information, for quality, for outcomes, for employment
- More market-oriented emphasis– students acting like consumers
- Will HE become a less attractive option, differentially?
- How will international students react to these changes?
- Impact on attitudes to PG study

How will institutions position themselves, and what will they offer for higher fees?



Student-facing national policy emphasises in a new environment

- Information for prospective students
- 'Employability' as a major factor
- Flexibility and portability of provision
- Greater collaboration and engagement with students
- Investment in enhancing learning and teaching

Improving information to support study decisions

Priority area for HEFCE, high Ministerial interest

- HEFCE, UUK & GuildHE consultation on information:
 - Key Information Set – providing information prospective students find useful, in places where they look for it and at course level where possible
- Broader information set to be made more accessible by institutions
- National QAA quality review arrangements will include a judgement / assessment of information from AY2012-13

Employability

- Longstanding support for employability e.g. CETLs
- Information: Employment data; development of salary indicator six months after graduation; professional accreditation of courses, employability statements by all institutions
- Curriculum and attitudinal change in HEIs towards knowledge and skills that contribute to employability
- Possible shift in student choice of courses – e.g. vocational

Flexibility and transferability

Government interest in encouraging new forms of provision in recognition of a more diverse student body and changing needs and costs. Main elements:

- Flexible and innovative modes of study, including better use of learning technology
- Credit accumulation and transfer
- Improved recording, and recognition of, student achievement (Higher Education Achievement Report)
- Mobility and the Bologna Process: recognition of qualifications

Student Engagement

Working through the National Union of Students and HE Academy HEFCE aims to:

- Encourage participation and effectiveness of student engagement inside HEIs.
- Support institutions and students' unions to better engage students in shaping their learning experiences.
- Access diverse sections of the HE community.

Investment in enhancing learning and teaching

- 2005-2010 – Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (£315m)
- 2009-10 – Curriculum innovation at King's and Warwick (£544,000)
- 2009-11 – Development of open educational resources (up to £15m)
- 2010-11 – Online Learning Task Force
- 2005-2010 – Support for the HEAR (£800,000)
- 2005-2010 – Flexible learning pathfinders (£2.6m)
- Higher Education Academy (£14m for 2010-11)
- NTFS - approximately £600K per annum



National Challenges

- Matching less money to priorities
- Smoothing transition to a different world
- Suitable national quality assurance and standards arrangements
- Balance between regulation and market/competition
- Ensuring WP and fair access are addressed
- Promoting policy objectives with reduced central funding
- Policy around possible institutional failures
- Possible changes to various national bodies, including HEFCE
- 'Level playing field' for new providers

Challenges for the sector

- New approach to funding teaching
- Uncertainty and volatility over market responses and decisions e.g. fee levels, student demand
- Responding to the student voice
- Continuing with the legacy and achievements of recent years – students will expect at least what they have had
- Considering interaction with private providers and further education colleges
- Maintaining and extending reputation globally
- Maintaining and growing curriculum innovation and teaching excellence