



All-Party Parliamentary University Group

24 November 2015



The All-Party Parliamentary **University Group**

Agenda

The subject of the meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group is the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework: how we can measure teaching quality in universities and how it should be rewarded.

- 6.00pm** **Lord Norton of Louth**, Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group, welcome and introductions.
- 6.05pm** **Jo Johnson MP**, Minister for Universities and Science, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- 6.15pm** **Dr Steven Jones**, Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester
- 6.25pm** **Iain Wright MP**, Chair, Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee
- 6.40pm** Questions, comments, and discussion with university leaders, MPs and Peers.
- 7.30pm** Speaker meeting concludes. Guests move to **Dining Room B** for dinner.



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Speaker biographies



Jo Johnson MP

Jo Johnson was elected as the Member of Parliament for Orpington in May 2010. He is currently the Minister for Universities and Science and was previously the Head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit in No 10.

Prior to his election in 2010, he was Associate Editor of the Financial Times and Head of Lex, the newspaper's agenda-setting daily business and financial column. His principal areas of interest are the UK and global economy, business and finance. His regional specialisms relate to India and France, the countries in which he lived and worked during successive four-year foreign postings for the Financial Times between 2001-2008.

A graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, Jo received a first class degree in Modern History. He went on to postgraduate study and has degrees from two leading European universities, with a licence spéciale from the Institut d'Etudes Européennes in Brussels and an MBA from INSEAD. Prior to becoming Head of Lex, Jo was the FT's award-winning South Asia bureau chief. Based in New Delhi between 2005 and 2008, he led the team of FT journalists that covered India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives. He was a Paris correspondent between 2001-2005.

Jo worked as a corporate financier in the investment banking division of Deutsche Bank before joining the Financial Times in 1997. A Londoner by birth, he is married with two children.



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Dr Steven Jones

Steven is a Senior Lecturer at the Manchester Institute of Education, which is part of The University of Manchester. He runs the university's PGCert in Higher Education and conducts research into policy and practice in post-compulsory education. Steven has recently co-authored reports for the Sutton Trust, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and HEFCE that explore how socially disadvantaged young people conceptualise, engage with and perform at university. He is particularly interested in how students' cultural and social capital affects their HE experience, from application to employment.

Steven has presented research findings to Universities UK (2012), the Employers and Education Taskforce (2014), BIS (2014), HM Treasury (2014) and the ASCL (2015), as well as delivering a Westminster Briefing (2013) and addressing the Sunday Times Festival of Education (2013). He created the 'H.E. Watch' blog and is one of JISC's top 50 social media influencers in HE.



Iain Wright MP

Iain Wright qualified as a chartered accountant with Deloitte & Touche, the global accountancy and professional services firm. He worked for Deloitte for seven years before joining One NorthEast, the regional development agency, where his role comprised of advising on governance and risk management. Prior to becoming MP for Hartlepool in 2004, Iain was also a Councillor on Hartlepool Borough Council and held the performance management portfolio in the Council's Cabinet.

Since entering Parliament Iain has been a member of the Public Accounts and Modernisation Standing Committees (2007), and Parliamentary Private Secretary to a health minister (2005-06). Iain was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the department of Communities and Local Government in June 2007. In 2009 he moved to the Department of Children, Schools and Families as Parliamentary under Secretary of State for 14-19 Reform and Apprenticeship and continued as a Shadow Education Minister after the 2010 election. In 2011 Iain joined the Business, Innovation & Skills shadow ministerial team. He is the current Chair of the Business Innovation & Skills Select Committee.



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Briefing: The proposed Teaching Excellence Framework

Prepared for members of the All-Party Parliamentary University Group

This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues.

This briefing document has been produced by Universities UK which provides the Secretariat for the University APPG.



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The Higher Education Green Paper

The Higher Education Green Paper, *Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*, signals one of the most significant changes to the national framework for higher education in a generation. It covers a number of areas including:

- the introduction of a teaching excellence framework
- objectives for improving access of socially disadvantaged students into the sector
- changes to the process and requirements governing entry of new providers into the system
- the regulatory and policy architecture of the sector.

This briefing summarises the proposals.

Quality assurance and teaching excellence

Quality assurance

A consultation on quality assurance has recently been carried out by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and so detailed questions on quality assurance are not considered in this Green Paper. However, it does reiterate a commitment to a risk-based approach using shared metrics between the quality assurance system and TEF where possible to avoid unnecessary burden.

Introduction of the TEF

The TEF is intended to give prospective students more information about the teaching they will receive on courses, and incentivise excellent teaching. It will consist of a number of levels of award that can be applied for, and will have a staggered introduction with only the first level of TEF awarded in the first year of the new regime.

This first level will be tied to quality assurance baseline, and as such assessment against it will be mandatory. It is expected that in the first year of operation the ability to increase fees in line with inflation, for new students in 2017–18, will be tied to achieving this first level.

From year two of the new regime higher level awards will be available for institutions to apply for, with tiers up to Level 4 proposed. Applying for these higher levels will not be mandatory.



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TEF assessments

While (at least in the first instance) the first level of the TEF will be linked to quality assurance mechanisms, higher levels will be made on the basis of applications made by institutions.

These applications will involve certain core elements including metric measures supported by a narrative element, and be made on the basis of the judgement of expert panels. The metric measures, which might include graduate outcomes and widening participation measures, will be benchmarked by institution to account for factors such as the prior attainment of students.

Incentives

As the higher levels of award are introduced, fee caps corresponding to each level achieved will be set each year. The Green Paper suggests that uplifts to the fee caps would not exceed real terms increases.

If granted a higher award, the institution would maintain this award for a number of years – the Green Paper suggests three years or five years – unless reappraisal were triggered by the body responsible for TEF in response to concerns, or as a result of changes at the institution.

Social mobility and widening participation

The green paper sets out a series of measures related to increasing social mobility through widening participation in higher education.

Widening participation goals

The Green Paper reiterates the prime minister's previously announced goals social mobility goals, which include:

- a doubling of the number of socially disadvantaged students entering higher education between 2009 and 2020 (from 13.6% to 27.2%)
- increasing the number of back and minority ethnic (BME) young people attending university by 20% by 2020 (equivalent to 19,000 extra students)

The Green Paper also proposes that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) takes forward the recommendations in its report, *Causes of differences in student outcomes*, on the retention and academic outcomes of BME and socially disadvantaged students.

Universities UK has been asked to convene and lead a **Social Mobility Advisory Group** to address how best these goals can be met, as well as other challenges including the gap in progression by white males from disadvantaged backgrounds.



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Integration with the Teaching Excellence Framework

The Green Paper suggests some ways in which social mobility considerations will be significant criteria within the proposed Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The TEF is the mechanism through which individual institutions can apply for recognition of excellent practice in teaching. For example, it is suggested that any metrics considered as part of the TEF process will be benchmarked to the institution to account for factors such as prior attainment of the student body. Metrics will also be broken down so the particular outcomes achieved by those from underrepresented groups at that institution can be considered as part of the process.

Incorporation of the Office for Fair Access and HEFCE

The Green Paper proposes the establishment of an Office for Students (OfS), through the merging of many of the responsibilities and functions of HEFCE and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). This new regulator would maintain OFFA's responsibility for making access agreements with institutions (an existing condition of institutions charging more than £6,000 per year in tuition fees). The government would issue new guidance to the director of fair access – a specific post which will remain, within OfS – with a greater focus on success and progression of particular student groups.

Market entry and protecting students

New providers and degree awarding powers

The Green Paper seeks to simplify and streamline the processes through which institutions are granted the power to award their own degrees, given the title of 'university', and able to access public funding (including tuition fee loans for their students) for the courses they teach.

The existing procedures can be complex and formally reside with different bodies. The creation of a single 'gateway' into the sector has the potential to help with this, and was recommended in Universities UK's recent report on regulation, *Quality, equity, sustainability: the future of higher education regulation*.

The government also seeks to facilitate the entry of new providers of higher education, and to speed up the process through which an institution is allowed to grant its own degrees, rather than teach degrees accredited by another institution.

Currently the granting of degree awarding powers requires, among other criteria, that an institution can demonstrate four years of continuous teaching of courses at degree level (by necessity, degrees awarded by existing providers). This requirement is an important protection for students and the public, and we believe that it is right that the barriers to entry into the higher education 'market' remain high.



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Consumer Protection in the Teaching Excellence Framework

The Green Paper proposes that compliance with guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority relating to consumer protection and the provision of information to prospective students be a prerequisite for being successful applications under the Teaching Excellence Framework.

Managing institutional closure

The government also suggests in the Green Paper measures to protect students in the case of the closure of courses, departments and institutions. It suggests that all institutions would be required to put in place contingency plans in case of closure, with the focus on maintaining academic continuity for students and financial compensation being offered where, for example, a student decides not to move to a different provider or course. Institutions may have to demonstrate how they would compensate students if necessary (for example through a specific insurance policy or bond).

The system of higher education agencies

The Higher Education Green Paper, *Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*, signals one of the most significant changes to the national framework for higher education in a generation. This summary is one of a series of briefing documents covering key themes in the Green Paper, and focuses on the proposed reorganisation of the regulatory bodies, non-departmental public bodies and other agencies responsible for overseeing the higher education system.

Office for Students (OfS)

The Green Paper proposes that a new lead regulator, the Office for Students (OfS), be established as an arms-length public body. This new body would receive many of the existing powers and responsibilities of the existing Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). The new body would have a duty to promote the interests of students in its work. The director of fair access would remain a distinct post within OfS.

The establishment of a successor body to HEFCE with overall responsibility as a lead regulator for the sector is a key recommendation of Universities UK's recent report on regulation, *Quality, equity, sustainability: the future of higher education regulation*. We welcome this aspect of the proposals.

It is proposed that OfS be funded (at least in part) by subscriptions from the sector, as is true for some other sector regulators.



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Funding powers and responsibilities

The Green Paper outlines two options for how the remaining teaching grant should be administered: either by OfS following a letter of instruction from ministers, or within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. In either case it is proposed that the funding is distributed by the Student Loans Company.

The Green Paper does not propose that OfS retain HEFCE's existing responsibility for the administration and allocation of a major stream of research funding ('QR funding').

Other agencies and bodies

A number of bodies and agencies with important roles in the higher education sector are owned by the sector itself, rather than being government agencies. For example, UCAS and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (an ombudsman for reviewing complaints) will remain separate from and independent of OfS. The Student Loans Company will also remain as a distinct organisation and retain responsibility for the administration of tuition fee and maintenance loans.



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Further Information

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills open consultation, 'Higher Education: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice>

Universities UK report 'Quality, equity, sustainability: the future of higher education regulation'

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/QualityEquitySustainabilityRegulation.aspx#.VkyO0k0nxMw>

HEFCE report 'Causes of differences in student outcomes'

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2015/diffout/Title,104725,en.html>



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Future meetings

8 December 2015

Stamping out sexual harassment and 'lad culture' in the university sector

8.30am-10am, Dining Room B, breakfast served at meeting

Speakers to include Laura Bates, Founder of the Everyday Sexism Project and Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive of Universities UK and Chair of the Harassment on Campus Taskforce

27 January 2016

International comparisons of funding of the higher education sector

6pm-7.30pm, Committee Room 2, followed by dinner

Speakers to include Professor Sir David Greenaway, Vice-Chancellor of University of Nottingham, John O'Leary, Author, The Times Good University Guide and Vivienne Stern, Director, UK HE International Unit

15 March 2016

Flexible pathways: what universities are doing to support 'earn while you learn' options.

Why are part-time student numbers plummeting – and what should be done to halt the decline?

6pm-7.30pm, Committee Room 2a, followed by dinner

Speakers to include Mr Peter Horrocks, Vice-Chancellor, The Open University

For more information about the group please email appug@universitiesuk.ac.uk or visit www.universityappg.co.uk