



# The All-Party Parliamentary **University Group**

## University APPG weekly update

29 January – 2 February 2024

A regular digest of House of Commons, House of Lords, and higher education sector business.

If you would like more information on parliamentary business, or advice on engaging with Parliament or a parliamentarian, please contact:

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# Parliamentary business

## DfE – oral questions

On Monday 29 January the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, and her ministerial colleagues answered oral questions in the House of Commons.

### *Postgraduate Research Applications: Visa Changes*

Joanna Cherry KC MP (Scottish National Party) and Chris Stephens MP (Scottish National Party) tabled questions about the impact of changes to visa fees and conditions to the number of applications for postgraduate research. The Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education, Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, said that the Government's visa changes 'strike the right balance' between ensuring a 'fair and robust' migration policy and attracting top students. He highlighted that the UK has 46,000 postgraduate research students from overseas, making up 41% of postgraduate research students.

Joanna Cherry KC MP pointed to UCAS data revealing a 'notable' fall in accepted applications from international students. She said the Government's visa rules were making universities that carry out vital scientific research less attractive to international students. Robert Halfon MP said the government is 'well over' its target of over 600,000 international students per year and repeated that visa changes strike the right balance.

Chris Stephens MP highlighted that increasing the minimum salary requirement for a skilled worker visa by 48% from £26,200 to £38,700 will 'jeopardise' early-career researchers and academics coming to the UK. He accused the Minister of not answering the previous question and asked how the UK will be a 'science superpower' behind a 'visa paywall'. Robert Halfon MP stated that 36% of university researchers come from outside the UK and repeated the figure of 46,000 postgraduate students. He criticised the SNP's tuition fee policy for making Scottish universities unable to provide places for local students.

Sir Julian Lewis MP (Conservative) highlighted the *Sunday Times* [investigation](#), describing the findings as 'Russell Group universities taking students with much lower academic qualifications for undergraduate degrees'. He asked whether the Minister will investigate the findings and ensure the same practises aren't happening in postgraduate courses. Robert Halfon MP said he was 'very disturbed' by the findings

and that while he is a ‘strong supporter’ of international students he wants to ensure ‘a level playing field for all domestic students’. He explained he had met with vice-chancellors and had asked the Department for Education (DfE) to take out an urgent investigation into bad practise by agents. He emphasised he wants ‘absolute fairness of entry for domestic students as much as international students’.

Shadow Minister for Higher Education, Matt Western MP, cited recent research from IDP Education that found ‘45% of its August and September applicants to study in the UK would consider changing their study destination if post-study work visa length are shortened’. He asked what the Minister’s assessment of the impact changes to the postgraduate work visa could have on international strategy and the sustainability of the sector. Robert Halfon MP said this was a matter for the Home Office and the Migration Advisory Committee will come to its own conclusions. He reiterated that his department had ‘well surpassed’ its target for over 600,000 international students a year.

### ***Degree-level Apprenticeships***

Mr Louie French MP (Conservative) asked what steps the Department for Education is taking to encourage the take-up of degree-level apprenticeships. Gillian Keegan MP stated there are currently over 170 degree-level apprenticeships, including for medical doctors, space engineers, midwives and social workers. She said the Government is providing an additional £40 million in the next two financial years to support providers in expanding their offers.

Tim Farron MP (Liberal Democrat) asked whether the Government will invest in agricultural degree apprenticeships. Gillian Keegan said that Robert Halfon ‘will be very happy to work on that’ as the department looks to expand degree apprenticeships.

### ***Topical Questions***

Michael Fabricant MP (Conservative) said that the *Sunday Times* reporting was ‘comparing apples and oranges’, pointing out that foundation courses are the equivalent of A-Levels, not undergraduate degrees. Robert Halfon MP agreed that comparisons on entry requirements should compare ‘like for like’, but reiterated that he was still ‘appalled’ by the findings. He mentioned he had met with Universities UK and vice-chancellors and repeated that there will be an investigation by the DfE.

Paul Blomfield MP (Labour) highlighted that students from widening participation backgrounds are prevented from applying to the Turing scheme as its application deadline is in Easter but funding confirmation is received by universities in June and

July. He asked whether the Secretary of State will press the Treasury for a multi-year funding settlement to ensure the Turing scheme is open to all. Robert Halfon MP said they are working to ‘smooth out any issues’ with the Turing scheme. He cited that the proportion of disadvantaged students taking part has risen from 50% to 60%.

Rachael Maskell MP (Labour) asked whether the Minister will meet vice-chancellors and the Home Office to talk about the impact of international student visa rule changes on number of students and universities’ finances. Robert Halfon MP said the department has regular conversations with Vice-Chancellors and the Home Office and repeated that the government has surpassed its target of 600,000 international students.

You can [watch the session](#) or [read a transcript](#).

## **Progress made since the UK re-joined Horizon Europe – Lords oral question**

On Tuesday 30 January, an oral question on ‘what progress has been made since the United Kingdom re-joined Horizon Europe’ took place in the House of Lords. The question had been tabled by Viscount Stansgate (Labour) but was asked by Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall (Labour).

In her opening remarks, Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall noted that ‘negotiations...were protracted and quite difficult’ and it was a ‘great relief in the research community when they were eventually successful.’ She posed the following questions to the Minister:

- Is the Minister confident that UK-led research bids in this new round will attract their fair share of available funding?
- Is he aware of any difficulties there might be with visa arrangements for EU researchers who might want or need to come work in the UK?
- Is the UK government formally represented in EU ministerial discussions about Horizon Europe?

Viscount Camrose, Minister for AI and Intellectual Property, reassured the member that he was participating at ministerial meetings on the topic. He added that the government were ‘pursuing a wide programme of activities to maximise participation.’

Lord Johnson of Marylebone (Conservative) asked what efforts were being made to allow Switzerland to rejoin Horizon Europe. In his reply, Viscount Camrose highlighted the scale and success of the programme and said he would look into the specific matter.

Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat) probed on how much the UK had lost out by being an associate member and not a full member to the programme. In his reply, the Minister said associate membership allowed the UK to ‘access all Horizon calls from 2024 onwards, with the very small-in-volume exceptions of EIC funds or what the EU has determined to be strategically sensitive areas, including quantum.’ He added that they were working with EU partners to have fuller access soon.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (Crossbench) requested that the government makes clear its intention that associate membership would continue beyond the duration of the current programme. In his reply, the Minister said the government ‘would look very favourably at participating as and when its terms were made clear’.

Lord Winston (Labour) probed on the consequences of delayed association on citations and publications. The Minister said it would be ‘very difficult’ to quantify the damage and stressed that it is ‘going to take a very conscious effort to fix.’

Lord Patel (Crossbench) questioned the ear-marked funding during negotiations which had now been withdrawn. He asked the Minister to clarify the funding. In his reply, the Minister said it was ‘absolutely normal practice’ for unused ring-fenced funding to be returned to the Treasury. He said the government were committed to spending £20 billion a year on R&D by the 2024-25 spending review.

You can [watch the session](#) and [read a transcript](#).

## **Home Affairs Select Committee**

On Wednesday 31 January, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Rt. Hon James Cleverly MP, answered questions from the Home Affairs Select Committee.

Alison Thewliss MP (Scottish National Party) asked how changes to salary thresholds will affect postdoctoral researcher recruitment and the impact that will have on the university sector. James Cleverly said he has not seen evidence that increasing salary thresholds will have an effect and initial figures show that the level of applications is still in keeping with the number before the changes but acknowledged that it is very early to tell.

Alison Thewliss pointed out that salaries for postdocs are between £30k to £36k so will fall under the £38,700 threshold. She asked again what impact that will have on the university sector, as well as its impact on research quality. James Cleverly said it will mean people will consider the implications of coming to the UK more. He reiterated that the impact on the higher education sector is 'speculative' and maintained that the UK is still a hugely attractive place for the 'brightest' researchers across the world and the potential market of people who will apply is 'still massive'. He pointed to countries like India as examples of places where the appetite for UK higher education is still extremely high.

You can [watch the session](#) and [read a transcript](#).

## **Russell Group Universities: Foreign Student Admissions – Lords topical oral question**

On Thursday 1 February, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education, Baroness Barran, answered questions on the *Sunday Times* [investigation](#) in the House of Lords. Baroness Falkner of Margravine (Crossbench) tabled the question asking the Government 'what assessment they have made of admission policies for foreign students at Russell Group Universities'.

Baroness Barran said she was 'concerned to see the allegations about practise by recruitment agents and unfairness towards British students'. She said the DfE has launched an urgent investigation into 'university admission practises including the behaviours of agents involved in recruiting international students'. She said the DfE will take action to ensure fairness between domestic and international students.

Baroness Falkner drew attention to her role upholding public sector equality duty as chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). She alleged universities were 'in effect accepting cash for access', saying this was 'unfair at best and discriminatory at worst' as UK students don't have the same choices. She asked for the timeline of the investigation and information on how institutions may be penalised. Baroness Barran acknowledged these were important points and emphasised that the investigation will focus on recruitment agents and determining whether it is genuinely easier for international students to get places. She cited that there is no evidence of international students displacing domestic students in England and said while it is a matter of urgency, she could give no timeline for the investigation.

Lord Campell-Savours (Labour) spoke about international students as a way to develop sympathetic international relationships and understanding. He asked whether this is not better done by attracting the best and brightest from ‘problematic parts of the world’, not the rich and uneducated. Baroness Barran agreed this was important but said universities would argue there are other greater priorities in terms of quality of education they can provide.

Baroness Owen of Alderley Edge (Conservative) asked what the Minister is doing to ensure contact hours represent value for money for all students. Baroness Barran said universities are obliged to provide information on contact hours before students enrol and there are also student comparison websites, adding that the OfS regulates quality and value for money of courses.

Lord Addington (Liberal Democrat) pointed out that universities are very low on cash and asked when the government will start putting money into the system so universities take foreign students for quality not money. Baroness Barran cited figures on university income, saying it had grown by 24% over the last five years and UK fees have grown by 19% , as well as staff headcount increasing. She said ‘this does not look to me like a sector that across the board is in trouble’.

Baroness Twycross (Labour) highlighted that there is not a level playing field for university admissions within the UK, with many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds missing out. She asked what further action the government was taking on this issue. Baroness Barran said the government shares the commitment to making during disadvantaged students can access higher education and said this can take many forms, highlighting the government’s focus on degree apprenticeships so loans are not a barrier and the upcoming lifelong loan entitlement.

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Conservative) said he had benefited from free education and a grant that enabled him to study at the University of St. Andrews. He said under today’s system of tuition fees and insufficient funding he ‘wouldn’t have a hope’ of going. He highlighted disadvantaged students are being prevented from taking up places at Scottish universities. He pointed out that universities are responding to the lack of income from fees by bringing in lots of international students, calling it a ‘disgrace’. He emphasised that the situation in Scotland under the SNP was extremely worse than in England. Baroness Barran agreed, citing that only 66% of undergraduates in Scotland are UK students, down from 73% five years ago, compared to 85% in England.

Lord Pannick (Crossbench) asked for the investigation to focus on the stress imposed on students and parents, saying it adds ‘immeasurably’ to the stress if students



cannot be confident universities are applying a fair and transparent application process. Baroness Barran agreed that a sense of confidence in the system is 'absolutely vital', but pointed out universities are autonomous and she would encourage them to take the initiative.

Baroness Fox of Buckley (Non-affiliated) said we have 'lost sight' of what universities are for. She called it a 'con' that degree courses are being created as a substitute for high quality skills training, such as estate agent degrees. She said at the same time academia is suffering, citing the closure of the Music department at Oxford Brookes University. She alleged international students were being exploited to pay for 'this non-academic growth'. Baroness Barran emphasised that the government was working to ensure universities have high quality degrees that are accessible to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. She said the government was acting on concerns over foundation years, classroom-based courses and franchising.

You can [watch the session](#) or [read a transcript](#).

# Forthcoming business

## **Impact of industrial action on university students – Education Select Committee oral evidence**

On Tuesday 6 February from 10:00am, the Education Select Committee is holding the first session of its inquiry into the impact of industrial action on students, with witnesses from the University and College Union (UCU), the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), the Office for Students (OfS), universities and student bodies.

You can [watch the session](#).

# Written Questions

## Universities: Students

**Matt Vickers MP:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to help ensure that students from the UK have access to places at UK universities.  
 [UIN 10954]

**Robert Halfon MP:** This government is focused on levelling up opportunities so that every young person, regardless of their background or geographic location, can get the skills and training needed to secure rewarding, well-paid jobs. The department wants to ensure people have the opportunities that will open doors and create the talent pipeline that our country needs to prosper now and in the future.

In 2021/22, Higher Education Statistics Agency data shows that UK students accounted for 85% of all undergraduate entrants to UK universities.

A disadvantaged English domiciled 18-year-old is now 74% more likely to enter higher education (HE) than they were in 2010, and the department is working to further close the disadvantage gap with our Access and Participation reforms. HE providers registered with the Office for Students that intend to charge tuition fees above the basic amount are rewriting their access and participation plans to focus on raising attainment in school pupils. This will help ensure pupils have more options for post-18 study and that they are better equipped to choose the path that is right for them from higher technical qualifications and apprenticeships as well as degrees. Providers should have revised plans in place for September 2025, with the first wave being ready for September 2024.

The government is committed to a sustainable funding model that supports high-quality provision, meets the skills needs of the country and maintains the world-class reputation of UK HE. The department has frozen maximum tuition fees for the 2024/25 academic year to deliver better value for students and to keep the cost of HE under control. By 2024/25, maximum fees will have been frozen for seven years.

The government has also continued to increase maximum loans and grants for living and other costs each year. Maximum support has been increased by 2.8% for the current, 2023/24, academic year.

## **Plagiarism: Artificial Intelligence**

**Andrew Rosindell MP:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure that artificial intelligence is not used for plagiarism by students in (a) schools and (b) universities. [UIN 11006]

**Damian Hinds MP:** The department wishes to capitalise on the opportunities technology, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), presents for education as well as addressing its risks and challenges.

The department published an overarching policy paper on generative AI in education in March 2023. This paper includes a section on formal assessments and is clear that schools, colleges, universities, and exam boards need to continue to take reasonable steps to prevent malpractice involving the use of generative AI.

There are strict rules in place, set by exam boards, to ensure pupils' work is their own. Sanctions for cheating are serious, and they include being disqualified from a qualification. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and speaks regularly with exam boards about risks, including malpractice risks. Ofqual expects regulated exam boards to carefully consider the potential impacts AI may have on their qualifications and, where necessary, make changes to the way in which their qualifications are designed or delivered in response.

In March 2023, The Joint Council for Qualifications published guidance on the use of AI in assessments to support teachers and exam centres in protecting the integrity of qualifications. This guidance includes information on what counts as AI misuse and the requirements for teachers and exam centres to help prevent and detect malpractice. The guidance is available at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/artificial-intelligence/> (opens in a new tab).

The UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment has also issued advice on how AI is catalysing good pedagogical practice in higher education (HE). Universities must ensure there is rigour and consistency in assessment practices and that the awards and qualifications granted to students are credible and hold their value, which includes identifying cheating using AI. This is a condition of universities' registration with the Office for Students (OfS). The OfS has also given advice to HE providers on contract cheating and essay mills.

## Antisemitism

**Sir John Hayes MP:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on the number of antisemitism incidents there have been on higher education campuses since 7 October 2023. [UIN 10974]

**Robert Halfon MP:** Departmental officials have assessed evidence of antisemitism and racial hatred linked to incidents at English universities. Where concerns have arisen, officials have reached out to relevant universities to understand what actions they have taken, including reporting issues to the police where appropriate. The department also continually reminds providers of their obligations under the Prevent duty, where they should be working to prevent people from being drawn into or supporting terrorism. There is an online "Reporting Extremism" form where members of the public can raise concerns to the department directly.

The department also regularly meets with the Community Security Trust (CST), which monitors and reports on antisemitism in the UK. CST's latest report indicates that there were 154 antisemitic incidents in higher education (HE) between 7 October 2023 and 13 December 2023.

This unprecedented level of antisemitism on campus is deeply concerning. On 5 November 2023, the department published a five-point plan detailing concerted action to protect Jewish students in HE. The plan involves:

- Calling for visas to be withdrawn from international students who incite racial hatred.
- Liaising with the Office for Students on its role in reviewing antisemitic incidents.
- Continuing to make it clear in all discussions that acts that may be criminal should be referred to the police.
- Communicating with Vice Chancellors to emphasise the use of robust disciplinary measures and the importance of police engagement.
- Establishing an antisemitism quality seal in HE, which will enable universities to demonstrate a tangible commitment to tackling antisemitism.

In the 22 November 2023 Autumn Statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an additional £7 million of funding over three years for a comprehensive package of measures to tackle antisemitism in schools, colleges and universities. The

department will issue an invitation to tender shortly for organisations interested in delivering this package.

## **Students: Loans (1)**

**Charlotte Nichols MP:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average annual net effect of student loan interest payments on the public purse was in each of the last five years. [UIN 11451]

**Robert Halfon MP:** Student loan repayments are not broken down by interest versus loan portions, meaning that “student loan interest repayments” are not directly measured.

The interest rate charged on a student loan does not affect the amount a borrower repays on a student loan in a given month because the repayment is a proportion of income over a threshold. Unlike mortgages, a higher interest rate on a loan does not lead to higher repayments. As such, in terms of cashflow, total repayment levels in the last 5 years are not greatly affected by increased interest rates.

Statistics on income contingent repayments and interest added to student loans, at a national level, are published by the Student Loans Company here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/student-loans-in-england-2022-to-2023>.

## **Students: Loans (2)**

**Mike Amesbury MP:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether she has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of increasing maximum student loan amounts in line with inflation. [UIN 11426]

**Robert Halfon MP:** The department has frozen maximum tuition fees for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years to deliver better value for students, and to keep the cost of higher education (HE) under control. By 2024/25, maximum fees will have been frozen for seven years.

The government recognises the additional cost-of-living pressures that have arisen this year and that are impacting students. The department has therefore already made £276 million of student premium and mental health funding available for the 2023/24 academic year to support successful outcomes for students, including disadvantaged students.

The government has increased loans for living costs each year for students in England, with a 2.8% increase for the current 2023/24 academic year, and a further 2.5% increase announced for the 2024/25 academic year. Decisions on student finance have had to be taken to ensure the system remains financially sustainable and the costs of HE are shared fairly between students and taxpayers, not all of whom have benefited from going to university.

Students awarded a loan for living costs for the 2023/24 academic year that is lower than the maximum, and whose household income has dropped by at least 15% compared to the income provided for their original assessment can apply for their entitlement to be reassessed.

The department is now making a further £10 million of one-off support available to support student mental health and hardship funding. This funding will complement the help universities are providing through their own bursary, scholarship and hardship support schemes.

## **Students: Gambling**

**Lord Browne of Belmont:** To ask His Majesty's Government what measures they have in place to improve coordination between schools, colleges, universities and support services to better assist students struggling with gambling addiction. [UIN HL1681]

**Baroness Barran:** The government is committed to tackling gambling-related harms. While education settings are not mental health or gambling-related harm specialists, they are well placed to identify where a child or young person is struggling and help them to access support, linking them to NHS support and specialist services as needed.

Where gambling problems are affecting the mental health of young people, our programme of Mental Health Support Teams and senior mental health lead training supports schools and colleges to identify individuals in need of further support and make effective referrals to external agencies, to help young people get appropriate, timely support.

The department works closely with the higher education (HE) sector to promote and fund effective mental health support for university students. £15 million of funding this year from the Office for Students (OfS) will go to mental health support and the OfS-funded Student Space continues to provide students with free online mental health resources and confidential support on a range of topics, including addiction support. The OfS has also brought together HE providers and NHS trusts across each

region in England to deliver better join up between university wellbeing support and NHS services.

Additionally, schools, colleges and universities have access to the NHS webpage 'Help for problem gambling'. This covers common indicators which could help identify whether individuals may be experiencing gambling-related harm, as well as providing initial signposting to the sources of support available to those in need. A link to the webpage can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support/gambling-addiction/>.

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to expand geographical coverage of treatment for those experiencing gambling-related harm, the National Problem Gambling Clinic in London offers specialist treatment and support for children and young people.

The government White Paper 'High stakes: gambling reform for the digital age', published in April 2023, announced the introduction of a statutory levy on gambling operators to fund the research, prevention and treatment of gambling-related harms. This presents an opportunity to consider how best to improve awareness and understanding of gambling-related harms amongst young people, and how to ensure availability of effective support across all educational settings.



# Sector News

## Consultation on draft updated OIA Scheme Rules

On Monday 29 January, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) published draft updated Rules of the OIA Scheme for consultation, to take account of changes resulting from the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023

OIA invites comments on the draft updated Rules from sector bodies, higher education providers, student representative bodies, students and anyone else with an interest.

The closing date for responses to the consultation is 8 March 2024.

You can [view the consultation](#).

## Higher Education Staff Data 2022/23 – HESA statistics release

On Tuesday 30 January, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) released open data showing demographic and contractual information about academic staff at UK higher education providers in the 2022/23 academic year.

Key data include:

- The nationality of staff differs between cost centres with over 55% of academic staff in economics and chemical engineering having non-UK nationality. Nursing and sports science had the lowest proportions of non-UK nationality academic staff at below 15%
- 56% of academic staff held a doctorate in 2022/23.
- Science and engineering cost centres have the highest proportion of academic staff aged 40 or under.

You can [read more](#).

## **Update on UKRI doctoral funding and training – UKRI update**

On Tuesday 30 January, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) released an update on the doctoral focal and landscape awards, core offer and recruitment guidance. UKRI research councils are preparing to commit over £500 million in 2024 to support doctoral studentships through their new doctoral landscape awards.

You can [read the update](#).

## **Are universities letting international students in on lower grades? – UUK analysis**

On Tuesday 30 January, Universities UK published an article fact-checking the claims made by the *Sunday Times* investigation, written by Director of Universities UK International.

This examined key claims relating to international students ‘buying their way’ onto competitive courses and the use of ‘middle men’ to recruit students.

You can [read the article](#).

## **International students entering the UK labour market – Migration Observatory analysis**

On Tuesday 30 January, the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford published analysis using data from freedom of information requests to look at what international students do in the UK after their studies.

Their analysis shows:

- Recent cohorts of international students have been more likely to switch to work visas than in the past. This is not just because of the Graduate visa. More students are switching to long-term Skilled Worker Route visas, which provide a path to permanent residence in the UK.
- A major factor behind the higher numbers switching to long-term work visas is the decision to make care workers eligible for the Skilled Worker Route in early 2022. More than half of all people who switched from graduate visas to skilled worker visas in the year ending June 2023 went into care work. This

suggests many former students are overqualified for their Skilled Worker Route jobs.

- Relying on former students to help staff the care sector has advantages and disadvantages. Being overqualified may mean international graduates lose opportunities to build their skills. However, it is possible that graduate-to-work switchers are less vulnerable to exploitation, which has been a significant problem in the care sector.

You can [read the article](#).

## **The Manifesto for our Future – NUS publication**

On Tuesday 30 January, the National Union of Students (NUS) published a manifesto which sets out what students and apprentices want to see from the next government to improve student life, education and society.

It is based on consultation with more than 10,000 students and apprentices and more than 500 universities, colleges and training providers across the UK.

The manifesto has five key sections:

1. In the first 100 days, break the student crisis cycle.
2. Invest in a thriving future, invest in education.
3. Homes for our futures.
4. A welcoming and inclusive future.
5. A healthy future.

You can [read more](#).

## **Provide or punish? Students' views on generative AI in higher education – HEPI policy note**

On Thursday 1 February, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) published a policy note in partnership with Kortext exploring students' attitudes towards AI based on a poll of 1,250 students through UCAS. The research found that the use of

generative AI has become normalised in higher education, but that universities have so far prevented an epidemic of AI-based cheating.

The report recommends:

1. Institutions should develop clear policies on what AI use is acceptable and what is unacceptable.
2. Where AI has benefits, institutions should teach students how to use it effectively and how to check whether the content it produces is of high quality.
3. To prevent the 'digital divide' from growing, institutions should provide AI tools for those who cannot afford them to aid learning.
4. The Department for Education (DfE) and devolved administrations should urgently commission reviews to explore how academic assessment will be affected by AI.

You can [read the policy note](#).