



All-Party Parliamentary University Group

Weekly update

3 – 7 March 2025

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

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Parliamentary business

Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 – HoL debate

On Monday 3 March, the Higher Education (Fee Limits and Fee Limit Condition) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 was considered in the House of Lords.

Peers who spoke were supportive of the fee increase. Topics discussed include:

- How the UK's higher education sector is one of the best in the world and delivers internationally recognised research and teaching.
- The financial health and sustainability of the higher education sector.
- How tuition fee limits for undergraduate courses will increase by 3.1% from 1 August 2025.
- Improving access to the higher education system for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- How the increase in tuition fees sets a precedent for future fee increases, in line with inflation.
- Giving students greater transparency over degree choices and future employability, career options and earnings power.
- The impact of fee increases on those already part-way through their degrees.

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

Pre-appointment Hearing: The Chair of The Office for Students (OfS) – HoC Education Committee oral evidence

On Tuesday 4 March, Professor Edward Peck CBE gave evidence to the Education Select Committee in his pre-appointment hearing for the role of Chair of the Office for Students (OfS). The session covered topics including his motivations for applying for the role of Chair, what the challenges of the role will be, what steps would need to be taken to drive organisational change in the sector and how the OfS will support the sector throughout financial challenges.

Access to international exchange opportunities for youth work and adult education organisations, following withdrawal from the Erasmus programme – HoL oral question

On Wednesday 5 March, there was an oral question in the House of Lords on access to international exchange opportunities for youth work and adult education organisations, following withdrawal from the Erasmus programme. This question was tabled by Baroness Wilcox of Newport (Labour).

Baroness Smith's response to the supplementary question outlined the available international exchange opportunities of the Turing scheme, programmes offered by the DfE and the upcoming

Baroness Wilcox's then asks supplementary question on the Welsh 'Taith' programme, which she commends for its role in expanding opportunities to those who have never previously considered international exchange as an option are applying for Taith funding.

The Minister states that she notes 'her important point about how Taith—and now, the Government's Turing scheme—provides additional support to participants from disadvantaged backgrounds so that they can participate in international placements.'

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

International Women's Day and the promotion of women's participation and leadership in science and technology in the UK and internationally – HoL debate

On Thursday 6 March, there was a House of Lords debate on International Women's Day and the promotion of women's participation and leadership in science and technology in the UK and internationally. This debate was tabled by the Minister for Skills, Baroness Smith of Malvern, and Minister for the Future Digital Economy and Online Safety, Baroness Jones of Whitchurch.

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

Forthcoming business

Education – HoC oral questions

On Monday 10 March from 2:30pm, the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, and her ministerial colleagues will answer oral questions in the House of Commons.

You can [view a full list of questions](#) and watch the session.

Social Mobility Policy – HoL Social Mobility Committee oral evidence

On Thursday 13 March from 10:00am, the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee will hear oral evidence from:

- Alun Francis OBE, Chair, Social Mobility Commission
- Resham Kotecha, Deputy Chair, Social Mobility Commission
- Rob Wilson, Deputy Chair, Social Mobility Commission

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

Educational opportunities for young carers – WH debate

On Thursday 13 March from 1:30pm, there will be a Westminster Hall debate on educational opportunities for young carers. This debate was tabled by Chris Vince MP (Labour).

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

Written questions and statements

Graduates: Employment

James McMurdock MP (Reform UK): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment she has made of the employment rates between working-age non-graduates and young graduates. [UIN 31702]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: The department produces an annual publication that uses the Labour Force Survey and compares the employment rates of postgraduates, graduates and non-graduates. The publication can be accessed here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/graduate-labour-markets#dataBlock-3450d11e-68f3-4f34-9284-4a9dd67e861a-tables>.

The employment rates for graduates and non-graduates of working age (16 to 64) and for the young population (21 to 30) can be found in two of the tables provided in 'Section 4. Employment rates time series (2007 – 2023)' of the publication. These are highlighted below:

Employment rates by working age population for 16- to 64-year-olds: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/fast-track/8c070fb0-8bb7-4278-a65f-08dc7b21f080#:~:text=https%3A//explore%2Deducation%2Dstatistics.service.gov.uk/data%2Dtables/permalink/dcb4226c%2Dc97e%2D4908%2Dd8c5%2D08dd4a33315d>.

Employment rates by young population for 21- to 30-year-olds: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/a671ed04-c746-435a-6d61-08dd48e2728c>.

The figures in the publication show that:

- Employment rates for young graduates are higher than those for working age non-graduates across all years of the time-series since 2007. The latest figures for 2023 show that employment rates for young graduates were 87.4% and were 68.7% for working age non graduates.
- The gap between employment rates for young graduates and working age non graduates has been growing recently, increasing from 16.0 percentage points in 2019 (pre-COVID pandemic) to 18.7 percentage points in 2023.
- Whilst employment rates have remained relatively stable for young graduates since 2019 (pre-COVID pandemic), employment rates have fallen by 3.2 percentage points for working age non graduates between 2019 and 2023.

Overseas Students: Admissions

James McMurdock MP (Reform UK): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the increase in international student applications on the availability of university spaces for domestic students. [UIN 31700]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: Universities and other higher education (HE) providers are autonomous bodies and are independent of government and responsible for their own admissions decisions in relation to both domestic and international students. Our world class universities are highly attractive to all students.

This government is clear that international students, who make a positive impact on HE, as well as our economy and society as a whole, are welcome in the UK. They bring significant benefits, by enriching our university campuses, forging lifelong friendships with our domestic students and becoming global ambassadors for the UK.

Domestic students continue to make up the majority of students within our universities. Higher Education Statistics Agency data shows that international students made up 16% of all undergraduate entrants at UK providers in the 2022/23 academic year, down from a high of 18% in the 2019/20 academic year. Tuition fees paid by international students in the 2022/23 academic year are estimated at £12.1 billion, with this contribution supporting provision of places for domestic students and research and development.

The department will continue to monitor available data and engage closely with the HE sector to assess the level of international student admissions to UK universities for the next academic year.

Research and Development Expenditure Credit: New Businesses

Kanishka Narayan MP (Labour): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of research and development tax relief reforms on (a) startups and (b) scale-ups in the (i) deep tech sector and (ii) other sectors. [UIN 32032]

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray MP: In Autumn 2023, a review of the R&D tax credit system concluded. As part of this review, the previous Government extended the scope of the reliefs to include data and cloud costs, merged the RDEC and SME scheme, and introduced the Enhanced Support for

Research-Intensive SMEs (ERIS), which provides a higher rate of relief for loss-making, innovative companies. The life sciences and deep tech sectors are expected to be among the main beneficiaries of ERIS.

The Government is committed to periodically evaluating the R&D reliefs to ensure they are as effective as possible and underpinned by a credible, up-to-date evidence base. It will be some time before the required outturn data is available to conduct an accurate review. The Government will continue to publish annual statistics on R&D claims by sector and company size on Gov.uk

Research: Tax Allowances

Elsie Blundell MP (Labour): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment she has made with Cabinet colleagues of the potential impact of research and development tax reliefs on the expansion of small businesses. [UIN 32671]

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray MP: The Government is committed to periodically evaluating the R&D reliefs to ensure they are as effective as possible and underpinned by a credible, up-to-date evidence base. It will be some time before the required outturn data is available to conduct an accurate review following the changes announced during the review of the R&D reliefs. The Government will continue to publish annual statistics on R&D claims by sector and company size on Gov.uk.

More broadly, the Government is committed to creating a positive environment for entrepreneurship and is working with leading entrepreneurs and venture capital firms on how policy supports that, including the role of existing tax schemes, as set out in the Autumn Budget 2024.

Research: Tax Allowances

Pippa Heylings MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps her Department is taking to improve the effectiveness of the initial assessment process for research and development tax relief claims. [UIN 31089]

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray MP: All Research and Development (R&D) claims go through a risk screening process to determine which need further checking, with the majority paid without a formal compliance check.

Where risks are identified, HMRC opens compliance checks to investigate the claims, within established legislative time limits and with wider taxpayer safeguards such as appeal rights. Where a check is opened into a claim that on further investigation is

found to be fully eligible, HMRC aims to close its check and approve the claim as quickly as possible.

HMRC has required claimants to submit an Additional Information Form as part of their claim since August 2023. The information provided in these forms enhances HMRC's risking process by helping to more accurately identify claims that may not be compliant and reduces the risk of valid claims being picked up for a compliance check.

To strengthen the administration of the reliefs and provide businesses with greater certainty the Government announced at the Autumn Budget that it will explore widening the use of advance clearances for R&D reliefs.

Research: Migrant Workers

Charlie Maynard MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for the Home Department to reduce overall and upfront immigration costs for researchers. [UIN 31289]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology has regular discussions with the Home Office, and with other government departments, to ensure that the UK's world-class science, research, technology and innovation sectors are supported by a competitive visa system and immigration offer.

Since 2023, UKRI allows Immigration Health Surcharge costs as well as other visa costs to be covered by their grants. Many other organisations also allow these costs on their grants, and the Immigration Health Surcharge are allowable costs on Horizon Europe grants.

Immigration fees ensure that those benefiting from the borders system and the NHS contribute to its costs, reducing taxpayer funding. The Home Office keeps fees for immigration and nationality applications under review.

Universities: Industry

Danny Beales MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether his Department plans to promote universities as centres for industrial innovation; and if he will make an assessment with Cabinet colleagues of the potential merits of including them in the Industrial Strategy. [UIN 31745]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: Government has committed to developing an ambitious Industrial Strategy in partnership with business, devolved governments, regions and other stakeholders. This includes universities, who play a key role in driving local and national economic growth – in 2023, UK university spinouts raised £1.66 billion in equity funding, 9.5% of all equity funding raised by UK companies.

Charity Research Support Fund

Luke Taylor MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what assessment he has made of the contribution of the charity research support fund to (a) sustaining research investment from charities in universities and (b) supporting the financial sustainability of universities who receive a large number of charity grants. [UIN 31591]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: UKRI Research England is undertaking a review of their approach to their formula-based research funding, delivered in England through Quality-related Research (QR). This activity is called the Strategic Institutional Research Funding (SIRF) review. The review will consider the fundamental principles and the effectiveness of their current funding allocation mechanisms, in consultation with the higher education sector and wider stakeholders. This review is anticipated to continue until 2030 and will be made up of a number of discrete stages. As part of QR, Charity Research Support Fund (CRSF) is within the scope of this review.

Universities: Charities

Luke Taylor MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking to improve the financial sustainability of charity funded research in universities. [UIN 31590]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: The Government is determined to work with the sector to transition to sustainable research funding models, including by increasing research grant cost recovery. Charity funded research forms a vital part of the UK's R&D landscape, creating valuable research in the life sciences and beyond.

Students: Sanitary Products

Kim Johnson MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing free period products to learners in (a) further and (b) higher education settings in England. [UIN 32083]

Minister for Early Education, Stephen Morgan MP: Nobody should have to miss out on education because of their period, which is why the department provides free period products to girls and women in all state-maintained schools and 16 to 19 education organisations in England. Higher education (HE) institutions are independent bodies and so would be expected to make their own arrangements to ensure that pupils have access to the products that they need. Only girls and women aged 16 to 19 attending further education courses funded by the department within HE institutions would be eligible for the scheme.

Medicine: Education

Melanie Onn MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of medical school places. [UIN 33036]

Minister for Secondary Care, Karin Smyth MP: We are committed to training the staff we need, including doctors, to ensure that patients are cared for by the right professional, when and where they need it.

We have launched the 10-Year Health Plan which will set out a bold agenda to reform and repair the National Health Service. Ensuring we have the right people, in the right places, with the right skills will be central to this vision. This summer we will publish a refreshed Long Term Workforce Plan to build the transformed health service we will deliver over the next decade.

STEM Subjects: Higher Education

Kanishka Narayan MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the compatibility of UK university STEM courses with the skills required by the tech sector. [UIN 32029]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: The department published a Jobs and Skills Dashboard in May 2024, which allows users to explore employment, demand and education pathways for both science, technology, engineering, and mathematics occupations and occupations most relevant to the UK critical technologies. This dashboard can be accessed here: <https://department-for->

[education.shinyapps.io/ufs-jobs-and-skills-dashboard/?inputs_&navbar=%22Jobs%20and%20skills%22&tabsID=%22Summary%22&orChoice=%22STEM%22&shortageTimeChoice=%22Air-conditioning%20and%20refrigeration%20engineers%20SOC2010%22](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supply-of-skills-for-jobs-in-science-and-technology). An accompanying ad-hoc statistics release was also made available on Explore Education Statistics in May 2024, which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supply-of-skills-for-jobs-in-science-and-technology>.

Skills England will continue to assess the skills needs of the tech sector and the skills provision required to meet these skills needs. It is working closely with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the Industrial Skills Council to bring businesses, training partners and unions together with national and local government, including Mayoral Strategic and Combined Authorities, to develop a clear assessment of the country's skills needs for the tech sector and map pathways by which they can be filled.

Universities: Students

Martin Wrigley MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 13 February 2025 to Question 29255 on Immigration: Overseas Students, if she will make an assessment of trends in the level of (a) access and (b) participation in university services by (i) UK and (ii) international students. [UIN 32726]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: Universities and higher education providers are independent institutions, and the government plays no part in their day to day running. Consequently, the department does not hold data about trends relating to university services for UK and international students.

Universities: Technology

Kanishka Narayan MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, what steps he is taking to improve the commercialisation of (a) university research and (b) spinouts in the tech sector. [UIN 32035]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: Support for university commercialisation is at its highest level ever. The Higher Education Innovation Fund, which supports knowledge exchange between universities and the wider world, is set at £280 million for the 2024-25 academic year. To support spinouts, the Government is implementing the recommendations of the Independent Review of University Spin-

outs. 52 universities have signed up to the review's recommendations on improving licensing and equity stakes, including taking 10% or less equity for software spin-outs. UKRI has launched a £40m proof-of-concept fund to support researchers develop ideas ahead of spinning out. Over the last 2 years, Innovate UK has awarded £5.2bn funding to more than 7000 businesses, of which 86% were SMEs.

Higher Education: Research

Nick Timothy MP (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether he plans to accept Research England's proposed changes to the research excellence framework. [UIN 32242; Grouped Questions: 32240, 32241]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: Research England has notified the Department about their plans for developing the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2029, which includes the People, Culture, and Environment pilot. This pilot aims to assess the feasibility and practicality of incorporating this element into the REF. The findings will guide future developments of the REF. Final decisions on the REF's structure will be made after the pilot concludes and further engagement with the sector.

Research: EU Grants and Loans

Ben Obese-Jecty MP (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, with reference to the policy paper entitled UK position on EU's Research and Innovation Framework Programme, published on 26 September 2024, what discussions he has had with UK Research and Innovation on the UK's approach to the European Union's Research and Innovation Framework Programme 10 since that paper was published. [UIN 32353; Grouped Questions: 32342, 32343, 32344, 32345, 32346, 32347, 32349, 32350, 32351, 32352, 32354, 32355]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: In advance of the publication of the UK's Position Paper on the European Union's 10th Research and Innovation Framework Programme (FP10), the Government undertook extensive engagement with a range of stakeholders across Government including UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and its constituent councils, as well as with relevant representatives of business and university sectors. This engagement was used to inform the paper.

Since then, the Department has remained in regular contact with a wide range of stakeholders on our approach to EU Research and Innovation Programmes, including through regular stakeholder meetings and public-facing engagements such as

the Horizon Europe roadshows in Belfast and Cardiff. Such engagement will continue as further detail on FP10 emerges from the EU.

Overseas Students: Discrimination and Hate Crime

Martin Wrigley MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking with Cabinet colleagues to help reduce (a) hate crime and (b) discrimination against international students. [UIN 33209]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: The department condemns all forms of hatred on our campuses. Every student, irrespective of their background, should feel safe to pursue their studies at university.

As autonomous institutions, universities should have robust processes in place to prevent and tackle acts of harassment and abuse on campus.

This government is clear that international students, who make a positive impact on UK higher education, our economy and society as a whole, are welcome in the UK. They bring significant benefits, by enriching our university campuses, forging lifelong friendships with our domestic students and becoming global ambassadors for the UK.

Skills England

Ian Sollom MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many times she has met with the Interim Chair of Skills England since their appointment. [UIN 30449]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: Since their appointment in July, the Interim Chair of Skills England, Richard Pennycook, has met my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education six times and my noble Friend, the Minister for Skills five times. In addition, the Interim Chair has had weekly meetings with the Interim Chief Executive.

Lifelong Education

Baroness Barran (Conservative): To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to attract learners who have not accessed additional training and qualifications after leaving school or college to benefit from the Lifelong Learning Entitlement and to take higher qualifications at levels 4 and above. [UIN HL4917]

Minister for Skills, Baroness Smith of Malvern: The Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) will transform the student finance system in England, broadening access to high quality, flexible education and training. Under the LLE, new learners will be able to access a full entitlement equal to four years of full-time tuition. This is currently equal to £38,140 based on fee rates for the 2025/26 academic year.

Returning learners who have previously received government support will have a reduced entitlement, depending on previous funding received. Learners will be able to use this new entitlement more flexibly than ever before to fund individual modules as well as full courses at levels 4 to 6, regardless of whether they are provided in colleges, universities or independent providers.

All courses and modules with in-person attendance that are eligible for LLE tuition funding will also be eligible for maintenance loans and targeted grants. This represents an expansion of the maintenance offer for part-time learners and those studying technical courses. The department will work with the Student Loans Company, as well as providers, employers and learner-facing organisations to provide clear information, advice and guidance to prospective learners, including those who have not accessed additional training and qualifications after leaving school or college.

Sector news

Stop the Cuts: Fund Higher Education NOW! – UCU campaign

On Monday 3 March, the UCU launched their 'Stop the Cuts' campaign. The campaign calls for an end to the fee-based funding model, measures to end competition between institutions, a governance review of higher education and changes to environment policies. Elements of the campaign include:

- Rally and parliamentary lobby
- Evidence-gathering and reports
- Programme for branches and members fighting redundancies
- 'Stop the Cuts' member network
- 'Stop the Cuts' week of action
- Online and print materials.

Universities UK's media response:

“The financial challenges facing universities in all four nations of the UK are real and serious. It is the responsibility of university leaders to ensure that they remain financially strong. This has meant that Vice Chancellors have had to take some extremely tough decisions. Universities UK is leading a major Transformation and Efficiency Taskforce to support them as they do this.

Beyond this, while the recent uplift in home student fees in England and Wales was welcome, we need governments in all four nations to take sustained action to put our great universities on a firm financial footing. For English universities, as a minimum that means allowing the UK undergraduate tuition fee to rise in line with inflation, alongside increasing the maintenance loan. Public contributions to teaching costs should also be inflation-adjusted as a minimum. We need governments in all four nations to grasp the nettle to avoid the slow degradation of our fantastic university system.”

You can see details of the [campaign](#).

Higher education partnerships in conflict-affected regions – British Council report

On Wednesday 5 March, the British Council published research that outlines the impact of seven higher education institution partnerships in six conflict-affected regions, examining the social, economic, and political impact that these partnerships create and the challenges that they face.

The report finds that these partnerships are vital for advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion values, contributing to a culture of peacebuilding and reconciliation and supporting the development of peace. At an institutional level, they contribute to institutional capacity building, human capital development and knowledge exchange, and provide both partners with the opportunity to share their resources and support progress towards the SDGs.

You can [read the full report](#).

The Swing to Science: Retrospects and Prospects – HEPI report

On Thursday 6 March, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) published a report on the 'swing to science' – a shift of students in schools and universities from the study of humanities and social studies to the study of 'STEM' (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

The key points addressed include:

- Common-sense explanations – the impact of the financial crisis in 2007-09, or of the tuition fee hike in 2012 – only go so far: the swing in degree outcomes from 2013 has to be explained by tracking back to school choices in the early 2000s.
- A big jump in candidacies for Maths A-levels started as early as 2005.
- A smaller jump in 'triple science' at GCSE started about the same time, but for different reasons, and did not last as long.
- Girls' participation in STEM A-levels has contributed only a small part of the 'swing to science': participation among specific ethnic groups seems to have contributed more.
- The swing can be seen in Scotland too but is less pronounced than in England and Wales.
- Widening participation as a whole drove a swing away from STEM for 40 years but continues today apparently with the opposite effect.

You can [read the full report](#).

What does it mean to regulate in the student interest? – UUK publication

On Thursday 6 March, UUK published a briefing on how universities can regulate in the student interest. The briefing is based on reflections from a series of workshops that brought together university leaders and student union representatives. The workshops were headed by Professor Peter Bonefield, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Westminster.

The key themes that emerged from the workshops are:

1. quality
2. employability
3. conditions of learning
4. safety and belonging
5. transparency

These are some areas UUK believe the OfS should remain mindful of throughout its work.

You can [read the full publication](#).

Investing in ideas: why supporting university research and development matters – UUK and Elsevier report

On Thursday 6 March, Elsevier and UUK published data that highlights the volume, quality, and collaboration of UK research. The UK has long been a global leader in research, driving innovation and advancing knowledge across disciplines. One key measure of this impact is scholarly output - the wealth of published research produced by UK research performing organisations: with just 4% of the world's researchers and less than 1% of the global population, the UK has the third largest share of the world's academic publications (6.3%) and an even larger share of the world's most highly cited publications (13.4%).

You can [read the full report](#).

Pathways into and through higher education for young people with experience of children's social care – TASO report

On Thursday 6 March, TASO published new research, carried out by the Rees Centre, examining how people with experience of children's social care enter and progress through higher education.

The study found that care leavers – and those who have ever been in care – are four times less likely to enter higher education by age 22, and are also more than twice as likely to drop out compared with their peers in the general population. In a call to action for the sector, TASO is recommending that higher education providers support the entry and progression of these students – for example through additional funding in the form of a student premium for care leavers.

You can [read the full report](#).

Professor Malcolm Press CBE announced as next President of Universities UK

On Friday 7 March, UUK announced that Professor Malcolm Press CBE, Vice Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University, has been elected as the next President of Universities UK (UUK).

The role runs for two academic years from 1 August 2025 and is elected through a ballot of UUK's 141 members.

Professor Press will succeed the current President, Professor Dame Sally Mapstone FRSE, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of St Andrews, who was appointed in 2023. During that time, Professor Mapstone has overseen UUK's [Blueprint](#) for the future of the sector, the safeguarding of the graduate visa route and the building of a strong relationship with the new government.

Before his appointment as Vice Chancellor at Manchester Metropolitan in 2015, Professor Press served as Pro Vice Chancellor of Research and Knowledge Transfer at the University of Birmingham and served as President of the British Ecological Society from 2007 to 2009. His academic background is in ecology, with a focus on rainforests, sustainable agriculture and climate change.

You can read the [media release](#).