

The funding of higher education: the students' perspective

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scotland

Where NUS Scotland/the sector has come from



- A parliamentary majority to rule out fees, protect places, and improve student support
 - Scottish spending review did all of these - record levels of investment in universities, and the best student support package in the UK
- Priority campaigns to protect and improve college funding
 - £140m of cuts reversed over the course of the spending review
 - Student support and places protected



The context of the debate

- Official NUS Scotland policy to remain neutral on the outcome
 - But play an active role on educating and shaping the debate
- Strong supporters of Votes@16 and we welcome the franchise bill
 - Vital to consider how we engage these new, potential voters, and support them in their new democratic rights
- What will the role for schools be? Will voter registration and education be adequately funded? What future for V@16?

The values of Scottish education

- Publically available and free education
- Emphasis on ability, regardless of background
- Broad curriculum and choice
- Respect for a diversity of disciplines
- Improvements in student support

Fair, flexible and funded

The financial context...

- UK public borrowing = around £75 billion in 2014/15
- UK's structural deficit should be closed by somewhere around 2017
- Accumulated national debt will be over 76% of national income in 2014–15 and still over 74% in 2016–17.
- It is planned that by 2014–15, the Scottish current DEL will be reduced by 8.6% and the Scottish capital DEL reduced by 32.1%, in real terms.
- OECD average spend/GDP = 1.5%
 - UK = 1.3%, Scotland = 1.05%

The policy context

- Scotland chosen to remain tuition free, England pursued ever higher fees (will add an additional £50 to £100bn to the public sector net debt over the next 20years)
- No suggestion higher fees would benefit Scotland (historically higher RAB charge, large start up costs)
- The advent of MOOCs...how and where do we learn?
- Increasing competition from the far East...how do we respond? What of our links with UK, EU, and globally?
- Tackling the 'big problems' requires a highly educated citizenry (poverty, development, digital technology)

The unknown knowns...

- Fees & Funding
 - £150m income from, and 20,000 places for, RUK students
 - c.£1bn spent on teaching grant and tuition fee payments
- UK research councils = £232m (14.9% share - higher than population share)
 - Future joint research council(s)? A single Scottish one?
- Student loan RAB = 38% (higher than England)
 - Affected by future credit rating?
- Immigration – reserved (and unfair)
 - What would an independent Scotland look like?

Where do we go from here?

- ***It's about political choices*** (Creating a ***flexible and funded*** tertiary system)
- Flexible...
 - Rigidity means cost: students; economy; institutions; you...
 - Uniqueness of SFC: further and higher education
 - Ensure “articulation for all”, but can’t penalise the student
 - Multiple points of entry exit
- Funded...
 - Funding which follows the student (through years, and modes, and institutions)
 - No penalty for *having to* repeat years of study
 - Parity of esteem (Between college and university, FE and HE, vocational and academic) – includes parity for student support (FE v HE)

Thanks!

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