



**BRO&KE
BROKEN**

**Taught postgraduate students on
funding and finance**



national union of students



I am delighted to introduce the full report of *Broke and Broken: taught postgraduate students on funding and finance*.

This report represents a significant improvement in our understanding of the financial situation of taught postgraduate students and how financial concerns shape and define the taught postgraduate student experience.

In one sense, everybody has always known that funding for postgraduate study is scarce, and that information about finance is inaccessible. Postgraduate fees are unregulated, course costs are not made visible, and for those who want to undertake postgraduate study, finding the cash to pay for the course can be more important than finding the right course. Yet, until now, we have lacked the evidence base to make our case with conviction.

NUS believes that no student with the will and capacity to undertake any kind of educational experience should be held back by inability to pay. That this is currently what happens for postgraduate students is a clear case of social injustice. Widening participation is a priority for both the Higher Education and the Postgraduate Campaigns, and it is vital that we make it clear how finance and funding impact on access at postgraduate level as well as at undergraduate level.

Incredibly, the recent report of Lord Browne's review of higher education funding and student finance recommends that no change to postgraduate support systems is required. NUS considers these findings to be complacent, and unreflective of the reality presented here, in which postgraduate taught student finance presents a real struggle and a clear barrier to access.

It is our responsibility to make the postgraduate voice heard at the national level, to government and to the higher education sector. But as we say in our conclusion, nothing can change for postgraduate students until students' unions commit to ensuring that the postgraduate voice is heard in institutions as well. I urge students' unions to continue to work to engage postgraduate students on funding and finance, and include them in campaigns.

We would like to thank all the taught postgraduate students who took the time to respond to our survey. We have included many taught postgraduate voices throughout this report, and we hope that respondents feel that they have been accurately represented and that their time was given for a good cause.

We would also like to thank our member unions, the Open University Students' Association and the Higher Education Academy for their help with publicising the survey. We will welcome your feedback on the report and on postgraduate finance and funding more generally.

Contact: postgraduates@nus.org.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Porter".

Aaron Porter, National President, NUS

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Executive summary

This is a report into the financial situation of taught postgraduate students in the UK (mainly England). 2,457 taught postgraduate students responded to a survey on the costs of postgraduate study, accessibility of information on finance, sources of funding and the experience of self-funding, debt and attitudes towards finance. Results indicate that accessibility of finance is a key determinant of whether a student will be able to undertake postgraduate study. Moreover, taught postgraduate study can present a challenge for students who struggle to make ends meet, combine work and study and maintain significant levels of debt.

- 56.4% of respondents do not know whether their institution offers help with costs of postgraduate study beyond individual studentships. Part-time students are the least likely to know what help is available.
- 40.8% of respondents said that their postgraduate course was more expensive than expected, rising to 62.2% of overseas respondents.
- 66.9% of respondents were entirely self-funded, mainly through personal savings or a family loan (for full-time students) or paid employment (for part-time students).
- Of those who received some form of support with tuition fee costs the majority of living costs were paid by self or family. 24.9% said their sources of finance were not sufficient to meet their needs.
- 52.3% of respondents with financial support said that postgraduate study would not have been an option for them without that support.
- For full-time students, those who were self-funded were more likely to be in employment alongside their course, and to work more hours per week, than those students with financial support.
- Self-funded students were more likely to have considered leaving or suspending their course due to financial concerns than students with financial support.
- Students who have come through top-up fees are more likely to have existing debt prior to starting postgraduate study and have higher anticipated levels of debt on completion of their current course. 62.9% report that their debt causes them concern to the extent that it affects their quality of life.
- 60.3% agree that accessibility of finance or funding was a major factor on deciding whether to undertake postgraduate study, rising to 70% of full-time respondents.
- Only 30.7% agree that information about finance and funding is easily accessible.
- 73.3% agree that the educational benefits of postgraduate study are worth the time and money invested, but only 51.8% expect enhanced employment outcomes.
- Only 53.9% agree that their postgraduate course is good value for money. This decreases to 43% for the generation of students who have come through top-up fees.

Introduction

When NUS' Postgraduate Campaign was formally constituted in June 2009, we knew that one of the first things to tackle would be postgraduate finance and funding. Every postgraduate knows that finance is the big issue for postgraduate students – in fact, whether one is able to become a postgraduate student at all usually depends on accessing finance.

Our starting point is always that any educational system that ensures that benefits accrue in greater proportion to those who are able to pay upfront is **fundamentally unjust**. Only those who can afford to undertake postgraduate study are able to do so, barring the minority at taught postgraduate level who receive funding from an institution or an external source.

Throughout the autumn of 2009 the campaign gathered as much information as we could find to put together a submission to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills's Postgraduate Review, chaired by Professor Adrian Smith.

In our submission we made a number of points relating to postgraduate finance:

- A system of low-cost loans should be available to postgraduate taught students, ensuring that those who are willing and able to undertake postgraduate study can access it, rather than solely those who can pay
- Information about funding and finance at postgraduate level needs to be much clearer and more easily accessible
- Accessibility of postgraduate finance has an impact on access to the professions, an issue raised by MP Alan Milburn in his report, *Unleashing Aspiration* (2009)

At the same time, we acknowledged that there was very limited evidence available on things like sources of postgraduate finance, what kinds of people are currently undertaking postgraduate study, if there is an issue with access to postgraduate study, the value of postgraduate study for the individual, and much more.

In the final report of the Smith review, *One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education* (BIS, 2010), Smith referred all material relating to postgraduate finance to Lord Browne's independent review of higher education funding and student finance.

In February 2010 NUS published a policy update and research proposal on 'The economics of taught postgraduate study', explaining the current postgraduate finance situation and proposing further research into how economic/finance concerns affect the taught postgraduate experience. This briefing was in part motivated by new findings that the postgraduate premium – the extra earnings postgraduate students can expect from having completed a postgraduate degree – appears to be in decline.¹

This report is the outcome of that research – a survey of the financial experiences of taught postgraduate students. The decision was taken to focus on the taught postgraduate student experience in particular, as the financial arrangements for taught and research postgraduates differ significantly, and a higher proportion of taught postgraduates are self-funded.

In May 2010 we gave evidence to Lord Browne's review, reiterating our position that the student support system should be extended to taught postgraduates. Despite the specific

¹ Ginevra House, *Postgraduate Education in the United Kingdom* (HEPI and the British Library, 2010)

inclusion of postgraduate funding and finance in the terms of reference of the review, the final report recommended that taught postgraduate funding be left unchanged, suggesting that participation at postgraduate level reflects undergraduate participation, rather than reflecting the extent to which students are able to pay for their postgraduate study. Moreover, the report argues that individuals are the main beneficiary of taught postgraduate study and that private investment is reasonable, entirely ignoring the public social and economic value of postgraduate-level skills to the UK. The question of how prospective taught postgraduates are supposed to access private finance to pay upfront fees is not addressed, despite the application of the principle of education 'free at point of use' to undergraduate education – a clear internal contradiction within the report.

Our primary aim in presenting this research is improved understanding of the taught postgraduate financial experience. Questions on issues like the full cost of postgraduate study, accessibility of information on costs, sources of institutional help at postgraduate level and how self-funded postgraduate students support themselves have never been asked before. The chapters on costs and the experiences of funded and self-funded students give a picture of the taught postgraduate finance landscape that has never before been attempted.

We are particularly concerned with assessing the impact of undergraduate top-up fees on decisions about postgraduate study. Our premise is that higher levels of debt at undergraduate level can deter applicants to postgraduate study. The chapter on debt examines these issues more closely and shows that the 'top-up fee generation' is more likely to have debt prior to taking up postgraduate study and is more likely to be concerned about debt.

Finally, our results provide an insight into how taught postgraduate students assess the value of their postgraduate education and what kinds of outcomes different cohorts of students anticipate from postgraduate study. At present, broadly speaking, postgraduate students agree that their course is 'worth it' – but these figures are so finely-balanced that the smallest shift in quality, student numbers or price could change these perceptions.

For a fuller picture of postgraduate finance in Scotland, we refer you to the recent report *Still in the Red: Student Finance in 2010* (NUS Scotland, 2010).

1. Survey information and methodology

This chapter explains how we approached the survey and the numbers and demographic breakdown of the taught postgraduate students who responded.

The four main research questions:

- What are the costs associated with taught postgraduate study?
- How do taught postgraduate students fund their study?
- How do financial matters impact on the experience of taught postgraduate study?
- What value do taught postgraduate students anticipate from their course?

The survey was created using the online survey tool Survey Monkey, and was advertised via students' unions and through contacts at the Higher Education Academy. The survey was available for completion throughout June 2010.

Respondents were asked to confirm at the start of the survey that they were a current or recently-graduated taught postgraduate student. Only those respondents who had confirmed their eligibility for the survey and who had completed the survey were included in the final analysis (2,457 respondents).

All questions were optional, meaning that not every respondent chose to answer every survey question. Where numbers are particularly low, this is indicated.

Throughout the report, questions are broken down by demographic cohort, such as full-time, part-time and overseas cohorts. Due to the significant numbers of Open University respondents, demographic data does not include these respondents, although they are included in the 'All respondents' category. Numbers of respondents that were identifiable as belonging to one of the demographic cohorts used in analysis are in the table below. Numbers should be viewed as guidelines rather than concrete samples.²

Demographic cohort	Number of respondents
All respondents	2,457
Full-time (not Open University)	1,008
Part-time (not Open University)	402
UK/EU-domiciled (not Open University)	1,101
Overseas (not Open University)	313
Top-up fee generation (UK-domiciled, under 25)	521
All- or part-funded	842
Self-funded	1,698

² Eg six respondents did not specify their mode of study, seven did not indicate whether they were funded or self-funded and two did not indicate their domicile for fees purposes.

More demographics

Type of qualification

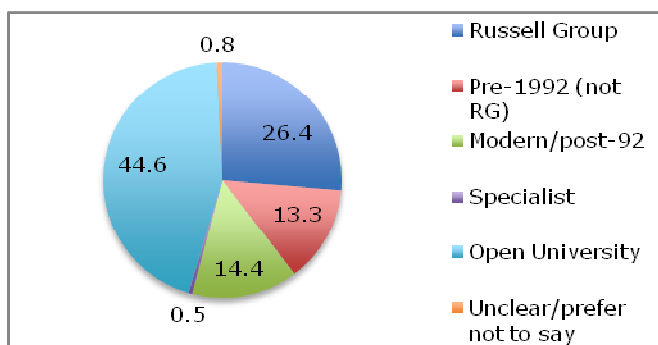
88.2% of respondents were pursuing a taught Masters course. The rest were studying for a different kind of taught postgraduate course, such as a professional postgraduate qualification.

Mode of study

40.9% study full-time. The rest study either part-time (15.5%) or as a part-time and distance learner (43.6%).

Type of institution

Respondents were asked to identify which type of institution they studied at. If they were not sure what kind of institutions theirs was they were asked to enter the name of their institution. Aside from specialist institutions there is a reasonable proportion of respondents from each type of institution.



All respondents by type of institution of study

Due to the very high proportions of Open University respondents that could potentially skew the data, throughout the report results for all respondents are presented, but breakdowns for full- and part-time students and Home/EU and Overseas students are presented minus Open University respondents.

We did not feel that it was appropriate to present Open University data alone, as we have not singled out any other institution for individual attention. However, we will produce a separate finance fact sheet for Open University students to reflect their specific circumstances.

Location of institution

92% of respondents were studying in an institution in England with very few respondents studying in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.³

Domicile

80% of all respondents were UK-domiciled for fees purposes. 6.4% were European Union students and 13.6% were non-EU/Overseas students.

³ A decision was taken not to publicise the survey widely in Scotland as Scottish students had been asked to complete a survey on finance by researchers at NUS Scotland in the recent past. The results can be seen in the publication *Still in the Red* (NUS, 2010).

Gender

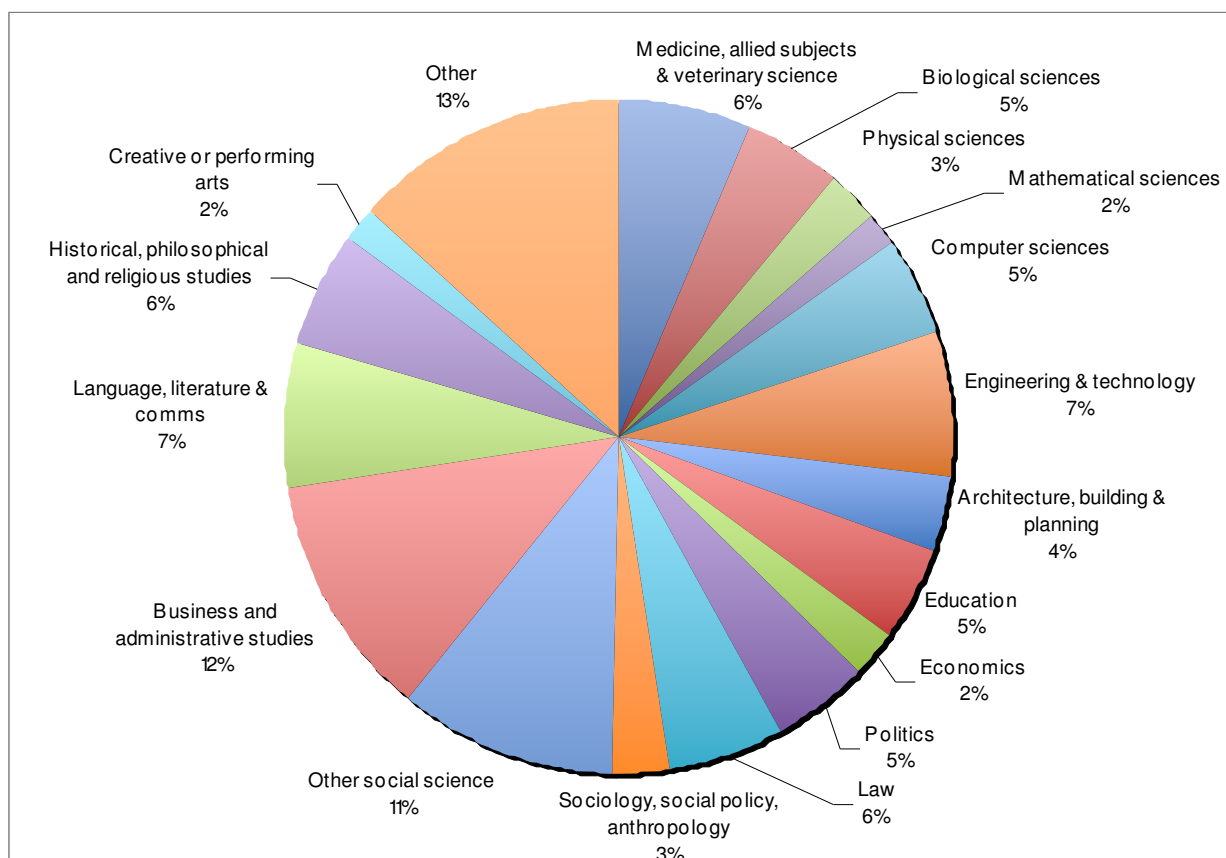
59.4% of respondents were female, 40.3% were male and 0.3% preferred not to say.

Age

46.5% of respondents were aged 30 and under. 22% were aged between 31 and 40. 17.9% were aged between 41 and 50 and 13.1% were over 50. Non-Open University respondents tended to be younger, with 70.3% aged 30 and under.

Main subject of study

Respondents were asked to select their main subject of study from a list provided: the same list as Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) subject categories. In the chart below some subjects have been combined to minimize complexity.



Overall, we see 26.9% of respondents in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, 45.6% on the social sciences, 14% in the arts and humanities and 13.4% in other subjects.

2. The cost of taught postgraduate study

This chapter examines the real cost of postgraduate study, sources of institutional help with costs and the extent to which postgraduate students were aware of the costs before starting their course.

"They make the course too expensive, I had little or no taught support so didn't know where the money went. This made it extremely difficult to survive, and it felt like PG courses were only meant for privileged people"

Tuition fees

Respondents were asked to state their annual tuition fee, inclusive of all academic costs such as college costs.

Table 2.1 gives the mean response.

As we know, there is significant variation not merely between UK/EU and overseas students but by subject and location of study.

Because postgraduate taught fees operate in a market, institutions are able to charge as much as they judge prospective students will be willing to pay. More popular courses in institutions with a strong brand are therefore, on average, more expensive.

Cohort	Average tuition fee (£)
All respondents	4,256.36
Full-time (not OU)	7,007.73
Part-time (not OU)	2,985.67
UK/EU (not OU)	4,084.40
Overseas (not OU)	12,075.97

Table 2.1 Average annual tuition/academic fee

On-course costs

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they spent per month on items associated with their course, such as travel, books, printing, photocopying and equipment.

It is rarely clear to prospective students what they will be expected to spend on on-course costs, which is why costs such as these are often referred to as 'hidden' course costs.

Table 2.2 shows the average monthly costs incurred on different items.

Item	All respondents (£/month)	Full-time (not OU) (£/month)	Part-time (not OU) (£/month)
Books/library fines	27.97	31.68	34.17
Other learning resources	12.45	11.04	14.55
Equipment	23.15	22.26	18.80
Attending events	18.34	10.31	22.94
Travel	55.94	71.30	78.12
Printing/photocopying	15.55	18.15	15.83
Other	31.91	63.12	10.54

Table 2.2 Average on-course costs

Travel is a particularly expensive item.

Not every respondent entered a value for every item. Respondents were most likely to enter a value for 'books' (2,267 respondents) and 'printing and photocopying' (2,135 respondents).

"[N]ot even the head of our department knows why our fees are so high. We pay much higher fees, some of which goes towards the delicate materials that we work with, but the rest just seems to disappear into the university faculty"

Institutional help with costs

A number of institutions provide scholarships for taught postgraduate study for individual students, but we wanted to explore whether institutions routinely provide help with the costs of postgraduate study that is accessible to all their students.

Table 2.3 shows the results for all respondents. Respondents could tick as many boxes as they liked.

This table suggests that there is very limited help available for taught postgraduate students from institutions.

However, by far the highest percentage of respondents ticked 'Don't know' (56.4%).

This suggests that the communication of information about help with costs may be a particular problem rather than lack of availability of help, although we cannot be sure that this is the case.

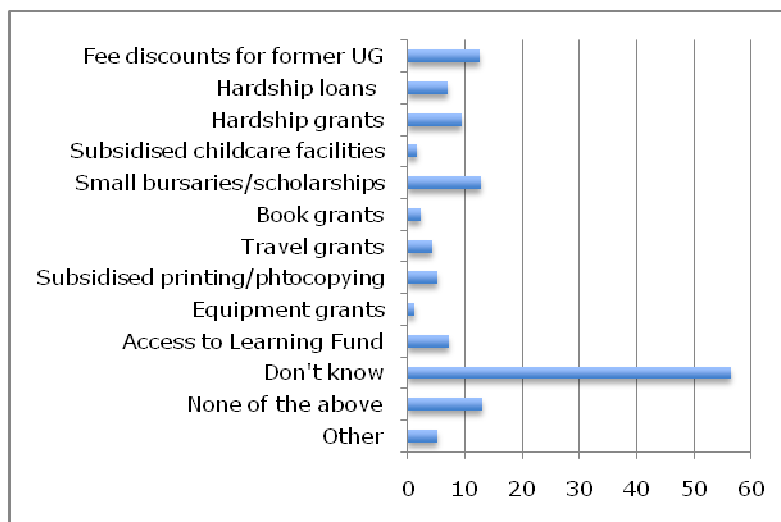


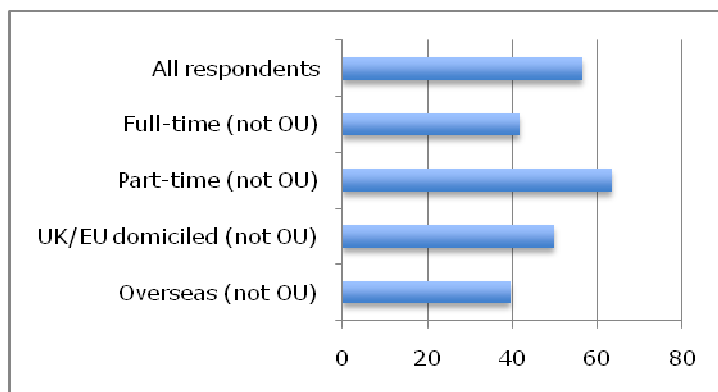
Table 2.3 Institutional help with costs (% of all respondents)

"Doing a PG course I have realised that it is more a question of balancing study and income, rather than just being able to concentrate on my studies"

We wanted to know whether certain groups of students were more likely to answer that they did not know what help was available.

Table 2.4 gives the demographic breakdown of respondents answering 'Don't know'.

Although the numbers of respondents answering 'Don't know' are high across the demographic profiles, Table 2.4 shows that part-time postgraduates are the most likely not to know what financial help is available to them (if any).



This could indicate poor communication with part-time postgraduate students, or it may be that there is less financial help available to part-time students or, possibly, that part-time postgraduates are less likely to seek out information on help with costs, or know that such support exists.

Table 2.4 Respondents answering 'Don't know' by demographic (%)

Expectations of the cost of postgraduate study

Respondents were asked whether the cost of postgraduate study is what they expected to be.

Table 2.5 gives the response of all respondents, and demonstrates that although a slim majority of respondents (54.1%) agree that the cost is as expected, a high proportion of respondents said that it is more expensive than expected (40.8%).

We wanted to know if there were any groups of students who were more likely to say that postgraduate study is more expensive than expected.

Table 2.6 shows the demographic profiles of respondents who said that their course is more expensive than expected.

Overseas students are the most likely to say that their course is more expensive than expected (62.2%).

Full-time students are more likely than part-time students to say that their course is more expensive than expected.

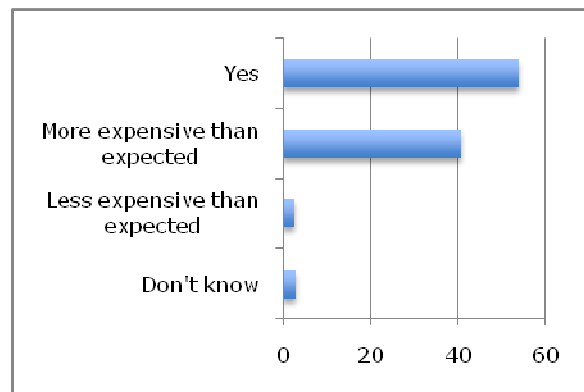


Table 2.5 Is the cost of postgraduate study what you expected it to be? (% all respondents)

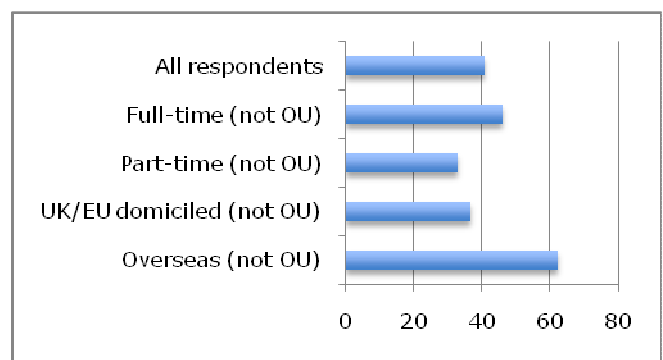


Table 2.6 Respondents answering 'more expensive' by demographic profile (%)

Advance information on costs of study

We asked respondents whether it was straightforward to find out in advance information about the cost of study. Surprisingly given the proportion that said their course was more expensive than expected, 79% of all respondents said yes.

Closer examination revealed that Open University students are particularly positive about this – 90.7% of Open University respondents said that it was straightforward.

Table 2.7 gives the demographic breakdown of respondents who said that it was not straightforward to find out costs in advance of the course.

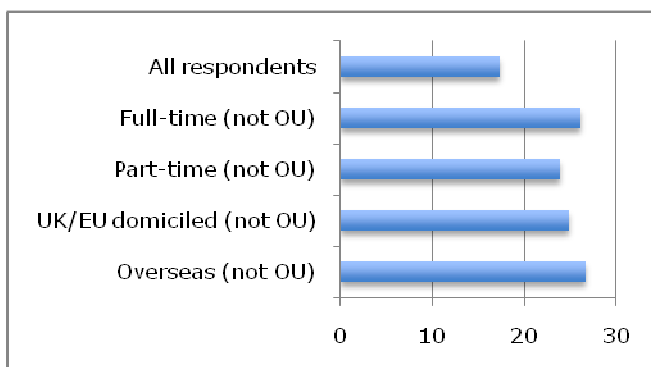


Table 2.7 Respondents answering 'not straightforward' by demographic profile (%)

The chart shows very little variation by demographic profile, but demonstrates that around a quarter of non-Open University students did not find it straightforward to find out course costs in advance in each case.

"I've said information was inaccessible. This needs qualification. Good clear information was inaccessible. (There is however a website that leads you round and round in circles before saying 'Forget it, this doesn't apply to you'.)"

3. Postgraduate finance: sources of financial support and the experience of self-funding

This chapter examines how taught postgraduate students fund their course, and compares the experience of students that fund themselves and those that receive some form of financial support. Knowing how postgraduates pay for their course contributes to a better understanding of the extent to which financial concerns present a barrier to accessing postgraduate study.

Proportions of funded and self-funded students

We asked respondents whether they receive any kind of financial support for their postgraduate study from an external source eg a funding body, charity, or employer. External sources do not include family members – students whose families pay for their course are counted among self-funded students.

66.9% - or two-thirds – of all respondents said that they are entirely self-funded. Table 3.1 gives the proportions of self-funded students by demographic cohort.

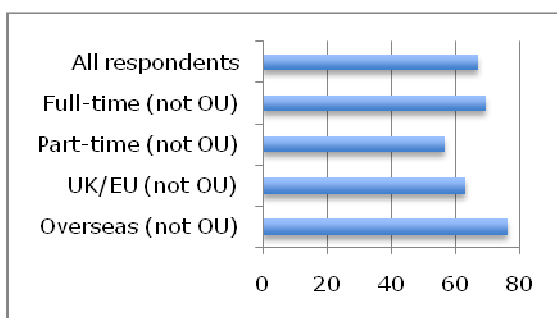


Table 3.1 Proportion of self-funded students by demographic cohort (%)

We can see that while the majority of all types of student are self-funded, overseas students are the most likely to be self-funded compared to Home/EU students, and full-time postgraduates are more likely to be self-funded than part-time postgraduates.

"Working while studying full-time is hard, but I couldn't afford it otherwise."

We asked all respondents whether they are in employment alongside their postgraduate course. We would expect a high proportion of part-time postgraduates to be in employment alongside study, so we focused analysis on full-time students.

Table 3.2 demonstrates that, as we might expect, self-funded students are more likely to be in employment alongside their full-time postgraduate course (39.6%) than students who receive some form of financial support (29.5%).

We also asked respondents about the number of hours they work per week.

69 respondents who receive financial support answered this question. The mean average number of hours worked per week was 12.3.

201 self-funded respondents answered this question. The mean average number of hours worked per week was 15.4.

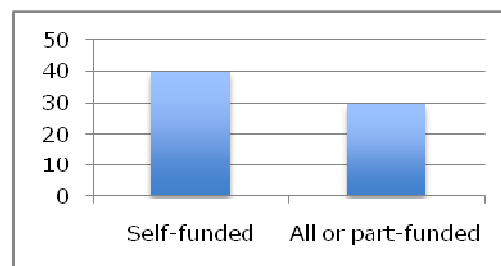


Table 3.2 Proportions of full-time postgraduates in employment (%)

"I think that I cannot dedicate as much time to my studies due to the hours I spend working. This in turn makes me lose out on PhD funding opportunities where they expect excellent marks"

The experience of students with financial support for their studies

We asked students who receive some form of financial support who pays for the majority of their postgraduate tuition fee, and who pays the majority of their living costs.

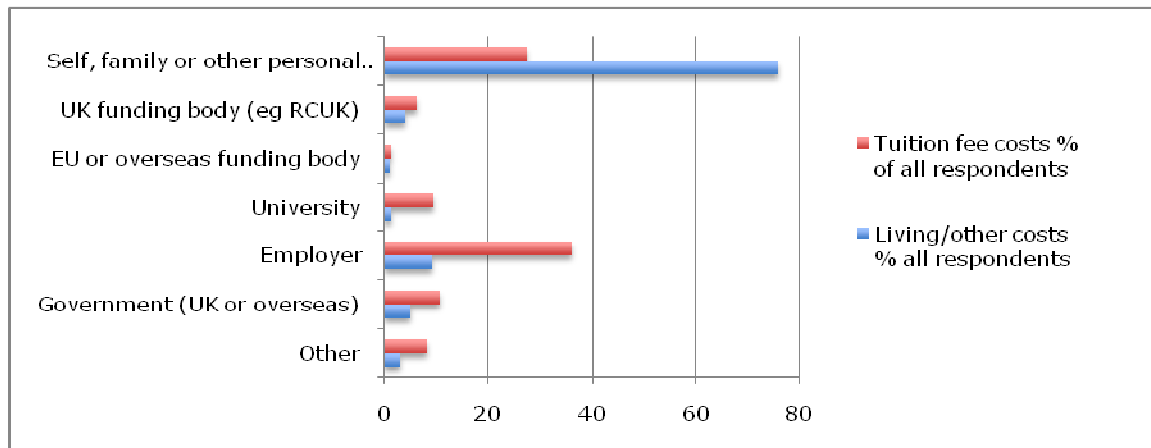


Table 3.3 Sources of tuition fee and living costs funding for students with financial support (%)

Table 3.3 demonstrates that even where postgraduate taught students receive financial support with their studies, they are highly likely to have to meet much of the academic and personal costs of study themselves.

We asked whether the sources of financial support received are sufficient to meet the respondents' needs. 24.9% said they were not. However, demographics affect this result, as demonstrated in Table 3.4.

Numbers at this level of analysis are very small in relation to the whole cohort, so should be taken as indicative rather than representative.

Part-time students (including Open University students, who are not represented on this chart) are more likely to say that their financial support meets their needs.

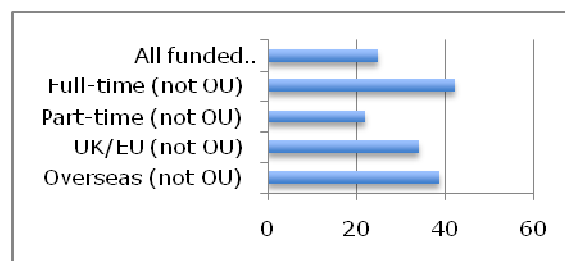


Table 3.4 Respondents indicating financial support not sufficient to meet needs by demographic cohort (%)

"Getting money is great, but: a) there are very few funded places for MSc courses b) the funding is not really sufficient for a whole year in expensive towns"

This cohort is most likely to receive employer sponsorship eg 56.1% of Open University respondents and 56.3% of part-time (not OU) respondents indicated that their employer pays the majority of their tuition fees.

By contrast, overseas and full-time respondents are more likely to say that their financial support does not meet their needs.

Even postgraduate taught students who receive some form of financial support for their study – notionally the lucky ones – may struggle to make ends meet.

"The tuition fees are paid for - I would not be able to do the course at all if they weren't, however I live on the breadline now, and the extras (books, printing etc) put a real strain on finances. Some months I can't be sure of meeting all my outgoings"

In order to get a sense of the effect of financial issues on the accessibility of postgraduate study, we asked respondents whether postgraduate study would have been option for them if they had *not* received any financial support.

As Table 3.5 shows, 52.3% of respondents said no. There was very little variation by demographic cohort for the response to this question.

"The financial support made me attend the PG course otherwise I will not be able to do so. It will help me to make a development to my country"

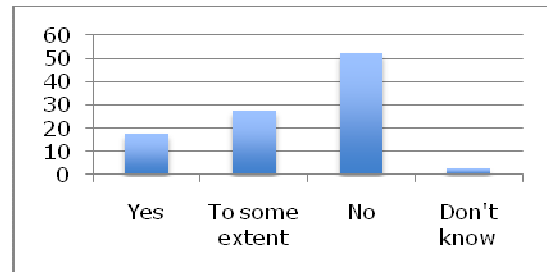


Table 3.5 Would postgraduate study have been an option without financial support? (%)

This data suggests that, of those who are willing and able to do postgraduate study, the availability of financial support makes a difference to whether they actually enter postgraduate study or not.

The experience of self-funded taught postgraduate students

Until now, it has been impossible to know how students without external sources of funding were paying for their postgraduate course. We asked self-funded respondents how they were paying their course costs, and gave them the option to select as many different sources as they chose. Table 3.6 presents the results for all respondents and full- and part-time respondents.

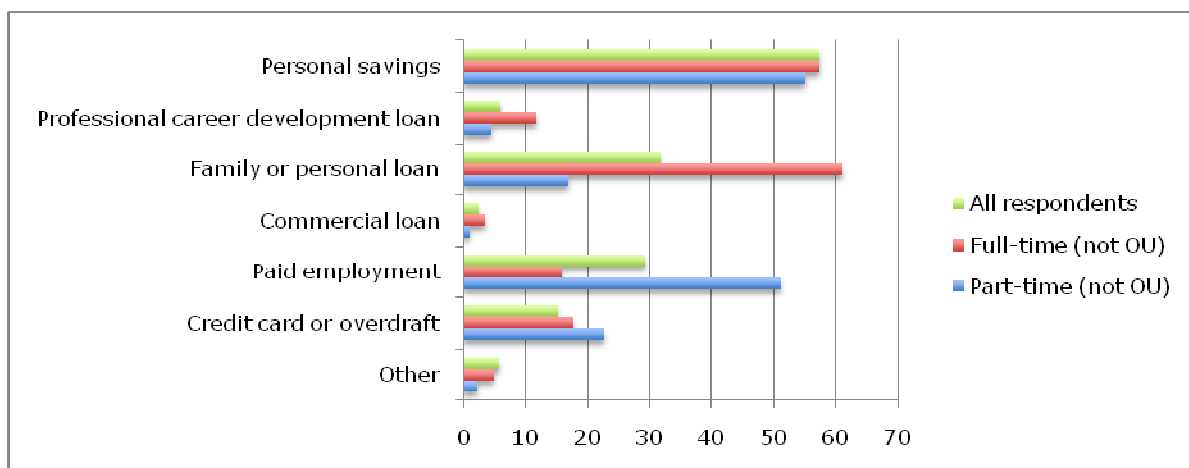


Table 3.6 Sources of finance for taught postgraduate students: all respondents and full- and part-time (%)

First, it is clear that in many cases self-funded postgraduate students access a range of funding sources eg combining paid employment with personal savings or a loan.

Second, it is worth noting the relatively low numbers of students who have accessed a professional career development loan (PCDL) or commercial loan to fund their studies. 6% of all respondents had taken out a PCDL, rising to 11.8% for full-time (not OU) respondents and only 4.4% of part-time (not OU) respondents.

Reasons for this may be to do with aversion to commercial debt, or could be because access to commercial credit is limited for these students.

"I would like to see clearer information on the availability of professional career and development loans. Specifically which courses and institutions are eligible. I engaged in my Masters course with the intention that this loan would significantly assist with the costs, however I was turned down by both banks operating the policy... Neither bank was clear on why my application was turned down"

It is highly concerning that 15.2% of all respondents report funding their postgraduate study at least in part through a credit card or overdraft. This rises to 17.7% for full-time (not OU) respondents and 22.7% for part-time (not OU) respondents – around a fifth for each cohort.

Finally, the table shows clearly the differences in funding sources between full- and part-time students. While both cohorts are equally likely to draw on personal savings to fund their study, full-time postgraduates are much more likely to draw on loans from family or personal relations.

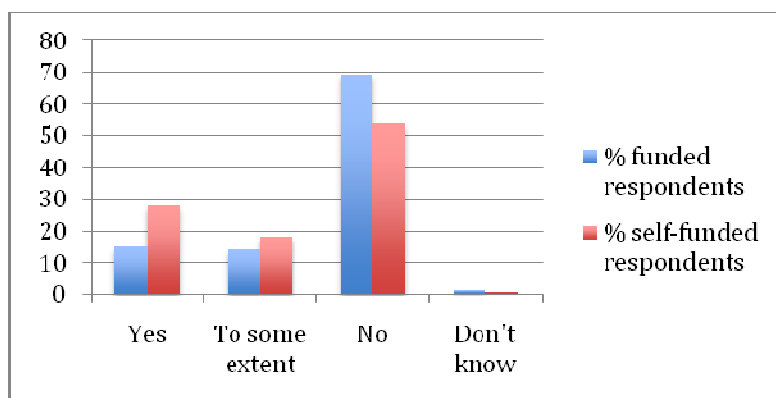
These findings have a significant impact on our knowledge of how students access postgraduate study. Although access to personal savings or family loans cannot act as a wholly reliable proxy measure for a student's socio-economic status (which is notoriously hard to measure), we can observe that the majority of respondents to our survey have access to family income or have/had a job that pays enough for them to be able to put aside money in the form of savings.

We cannot know with any precision the extent to which financial concerns act as a deterrent or barrier to postgraduate study.

However, the evidence of the scarcity and inadequacy of funding, and the limited possibilities for self-funding indicate that ability to pay is a key determinant of whether a student will enter postgraduate study.

"I was only able to fund my course because my parents were willing to sacrifice some of their own savings and personal income for me, despite not being particularly wealthy. If it was not for them, I would not have seen postgraduate study as a viable option, despite how much I wanted to do it, as I did not want to add to my debt from my undergraduate degree with a bank loan"

Finally, we asked whether respondents had ever considered leaving or suspending their course due to financial concerns. Table 3.7 presents the results divided by funded and self-funded respondents.



In all cases, self-funded postgraduates are more likely to have considered leaving or suspending their course.

29.3% (nearly a third) of funded respondents and 45.8% (nearly half) of self-funded postgraduates have considered leaving or suspending their course.

Table 3.7 Extent to which respondents have considered leaving or suspending postgraduate course due to financial concerns (%)

4. Debt and taught postgraduate study

This chapter examines taught postgraduate students' current and projected levels of debt, and explores the effect of debt on decisions whether to undertake postgraduate study. In particular, it shows the experience of taught postgraduate students who have come through top-up fees: the top-up fee generation (UK-domiciled and under 25).

"I thought having a MA degree would help me to find a better and better-paid job, that was one of the reasons to decide to do a MA degree. Now, I wonder whether it is not a disadvantage instead of an advantage in the current economy, which makes me extra concerned about my debts"

Prior debt

Respondents were asked if they had any existing debt at the start of their postgraduate course, excluding mortgage and any loans taken out to cover the costs of their current postgraduate course, if applicable. They were also asked what the source of that debt was and how much it was.

Undergraduate student loan debt was cited by the highest numbers of respondents and was also the highest average amount of debt cited.

Table 4.1 below shows the varying debt levels for the different cohorts, and the mean of reported existing student loan debts for those who entered a value for this question. Overseas students have been discounted for this analysis.

Respondent cohort	% with existing debt (of any kind)	Average UG debt (£)	No of respondents for UG debt
All respondents	45.5	12,833.15	839
Full-time (not OU)	56.0	14,513.60	493
Part-time (not OU)	51.1	12,206.67	148
UK-domiciled under 25	86.3	15,100.18	449
UK/EU (not OU)	63.5	14,062.78	610

Table 4.1 Extent of prior debt

The top-up fee generation is the most likely to have debt, and also has the highest levels of undergraduate debt.

Of the 1,141 respondents who answered questions about their sources and amount of debt:

- 536 (47.0%) cited an overdraft (mean average: £1,346.88)
- 428 (37.5%) cited store or credit card debt (mean average: £3,039.90)
- 304 (26.6%) cited 'other private/bank loan' (mean average: £6,543.28)
- 264 (23.1%) cited a family or personal loan (mean average: £3,848.11)
- 220 (19.3%) cited former postgraduate course debts (mean average: £2,646.01)

Anticipated debt

Respondents were asked what they anticipated their total level of personal debt would be on completion of their current course of study.

Respondent cohort	Mean anticipated debt (£)
All respondents	11,058.13
Full-time (not OU)	17,117.09
Part-time (not OU)	9,353.65
UK-domiciled under 25	18,799.90
UK/EU (not OU)	14,752.99
Overseas (not OU)	16,040.70

Table 4.2 Anticipated debt on completion of current course of study

Table 4.2 presents the results for those who answered this question.

The highest levels of debt are anticipated by the top-up fee generation.

"The cost of university is simply outrageous it is impossible to fund without help and the levels of debt cause an insane amount of stress and unnecessary anxiety"

Attitudes towards debt

Although it is useful to know how much debt people are in, the real question is whether debt has any detrimental effect on people's willingness to undertake postgraduate study, and whether being in debt affects their quality of life.

Examining the opinions of the top-up fee generation by contrast with all taught postgraduate students can provide an indication of trends in how students perceive the role of debt in decisions about postgraduate study.

Table 4.3 indicates the extent to which debt was a factor in respondents' decisions of whether or not to undertake postgraduate study.

39.5% of all respondents indicate that debt was a factor in their decision to a great or some extent.

By contrast, 46.3% of the top-up fee generation indicate that debt was a factor to a great or some extent.

Interestingly, the top-up fee generation is *less* likely to indicate that debt is a factor to a great extent, perhaps indicating a more fatalistic attitude to debt.

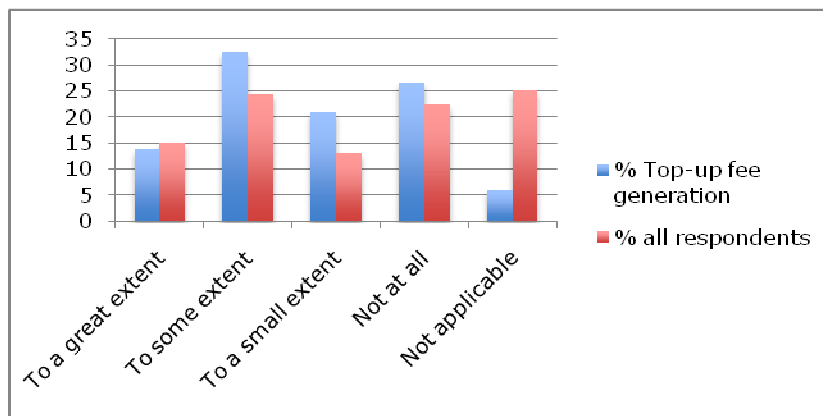


Table 4.3 Extent to which debt a factor in decision whether to undertake postgraduate study (%)

"I do have personal debt, but in order to progress in my career, I have no choice but to do post-grad study. I feel I'm financially damned if I do, damned if I don't"

We also asked whether their debts concern respondents, with 'concern' defined as 'causing stress, worry or anxiety such that it affects your quality of life'.

Table 4.4 indicates the extent to which different cohorts of students are concerned by debt.

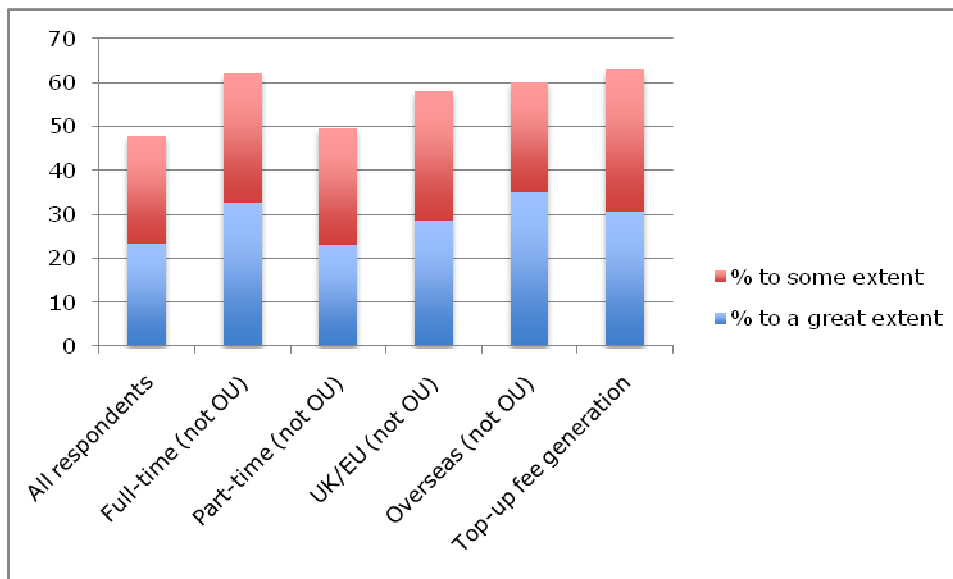


Table 4.4 Extent to which respondents are concerned by debt by demographic cohort (%)

"I put off PG study until I had paid off all of my UG debt and saved for the course fees because I didn't want to get into more debt. This took 10 years from graduation"

Although there is not a great deal of variation between cohorts in the extent to which respondents are concerned about debt, it is notable that concern is over 60% for both full-time (not OU) respondents and the top-up fee generation (between which cohorts there is considerable overlap anyway). Overseas students are also particularly concerned about debt.

The exact figures are: 62.2% for full-time (not OU) respondents, with 32.7% indicating that they are concerned to a great extent, and 62.9% for the top-up fee generation, with 30.7% indicating that they are concerned to a great extent.

Overall, the picture is one of considerable levels of concern about debt, but somewhat less willingness to allow fear of debt to influence decisions about whether to undertake postgraduate study.

Willingness to go into debt depends to some extent on having confidence that one will be able to pay off debts in due course. For taught postgraduate students, there is an expectation that the course will lead to enhanced employment outcomes. However, these expectations depend on a strong employment market and do not in any case apply to every student.

"In my situation, anticipating a career in academi[a], there is a concern that a master's degree alone does not qualify me for any job or salary at a more advanced level than a BA qualified me for; and that after a PhD the number of jobs available will make it difficult to obtain a salary commensurate to the level of debt incurred for the degree"

"The debts just seem to get bigger and bigger and I can't see a way out soon. If I give up my studies I am no closer to being able to earn enough to pay off the debts and support my family. I can only hope that paying more now will help me earn more later"

5. Attitudes to funding and finance

This chapter examines the attitudes of postgraduate taught students to various funding and finance issues, and tries to ascertain whether postgraduate students feel their course has been worth the time and money invested.

"If I had known when applying for the MA how much stress and trouble it would cause me I would not have gone ahead with it; the only reason I continued was because it would waste 6 months work to have dropped out. The stress of self-financing, and the complete lack of financial support, have taken a heavy toll on my mental and physical health, and have negatively impacted upon my level of productivity"

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with a set of propositions from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Statements were made on decisions to undertake postgraduate study, value for money and expected outcomes, availability of information about finance and effect of financial situation on the educational experience.

"Can't complain that much - I missed top-up fees and got funding for post-grad, but the lack of funding and increased tuition fees has put a lot of (very able) people I know off post-grad education and meant that they've gone into work instead"

Impact of finance on choices about postgraduate study

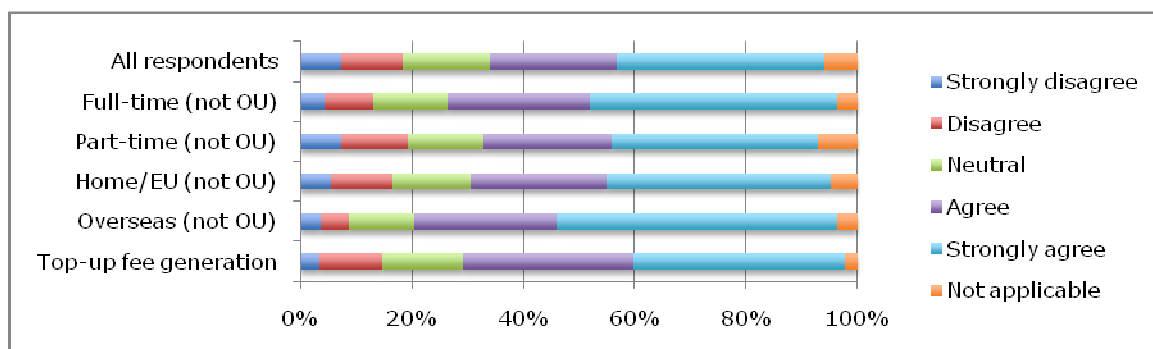


Table 5.1a "Accessibility of finance or funding was a major consideration in deciding whether or not to undertake postgraduate study"

Finance and funding play a major role in the majority of students' choices about whether to undertake postgraduate study, but – apart from overseas students – a somewhat less important role in the choice of course or institution.

"In choosing the course I did consider the cost of the course. Some of them, such as Economics or Finance, although were of my interest, were excluded because too expensive for my budget, considering I am self funded"

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	18.3	15.6	60.3
FT (not OU)	13	13.5	70
PT (not OU)	19.2	13.7	60
UK/EU (not OU)	16.4	14.1	64.8
O'seas (not OU)	8.7	11.7	76
Top-up fee gen.	14.6	14.6	68.4

Table 5.1b "Accessibility of finance or funding was a major consideration in deciding whether or not to undertake postgraduate study"

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	32	19.3	41.4
FT (not OU)	30.7	19.8	45.3
PT (not OU)	37.4	16.3	39
UK/EU (not OU)	35.7	18.9	40.3
O'seas (not OU)	21	18.7	55.3
Top-up fee gen.	37.2	21.6	38.4

Table 5.2b "Accessibility of finance or funding was a major consideration in my choice of course or institution"

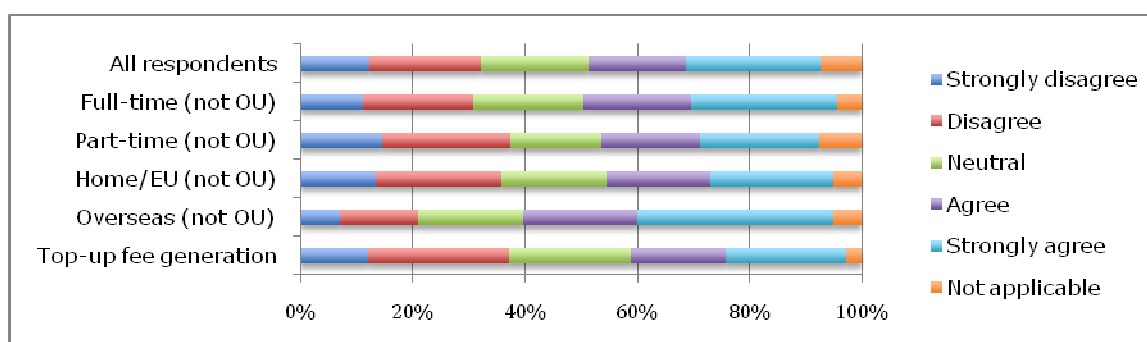


Table 5.2a "Accessibility of funding or finance was a major consideration in my choice of course or institution"

"I ended up studying at an institution which is inconvenient for me to get to, and has proved to be sub-standard, because the cost of the same course at a better institution which was near to me was double the fees. I was unable to establish why, and will forever wonder if getting into further debt would have been worth it in the long run"

Access to information about finance and funding

As the survey results have already indicated, a minority of postgraduate taught students agree that information about postgraduate funding and finance is easily accessible.

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	40.9	23.7	30.7
FT (not OU)	46.9	21	30.2
PT (not OU)	49.8	22.9	21.1
UK/EU (not OU)	52.7	19.4	25.1
O'seas (not OU)	30.5	28.5	37.3
Top-up fee gen.	56.9	17.6	24.9

Table 5.3b "Information about postgraduate funding and finance is easily accessible"

More work should be done to establish how information could be made more accessible and, given the limitations of the current financial arrangements or funding options, what the ramifications of self-funding are.

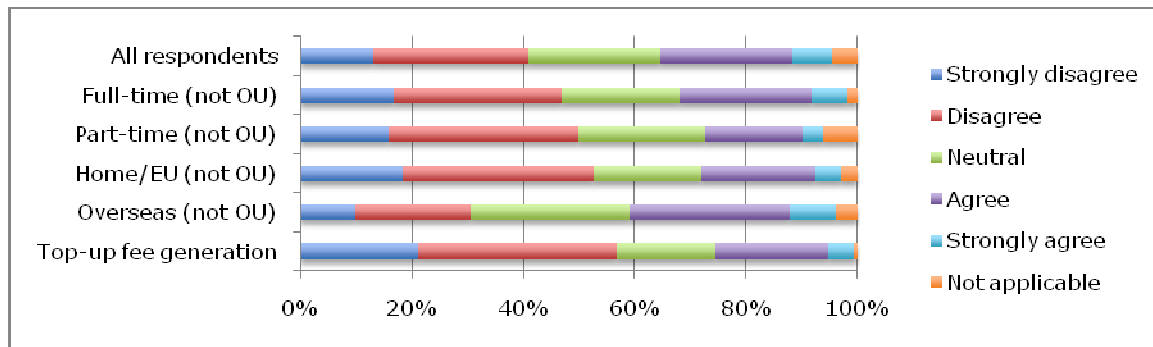


Table 5.3a "Information about postgraduate funding and finance is easily accessible"

Negative effects?

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	43.9	16.2	34.3
FT (not OU)	43.3	16.2	37.5
PT (not OU)	35.7	12.7	42.8
UK/EU (not OU)	40.5	13.1	41.4
O'seas (not OU)	43.3	22.5	31.2
Top-up fee gen.	38.9	12.5	45.5

Table 5.4b "My financial situation has negatively affected the amount of time and attention I am able to devote to postgraduate study"

Responses vary from a third to two-fifths, but in all cases a substantial proportion of respondents – particularly the top-up fee generation – agree that their financial situation has had a negative effect on their course and student experience. Still more do not positively disagree (ie chose 'neutral').

We wanted to find out the extent to which postgraduate students' financial situation impacts negatively on their ability to achieve success in their course, and on their postgraduate student experience more generally.

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	45.4	21	28.1
FT (not OU)	39.9	19.7	37.2
PT (not OU)	44.7	18.7	30.5
UK/EU (not OU)	41.1	18.3	36.8
O'seas (not OU)	42.3	23	29.7
Top-up fee gen.	38.4	17.6	41.2

Table 5.5b "My financial situation has negatively affected my postgraduate student experience"

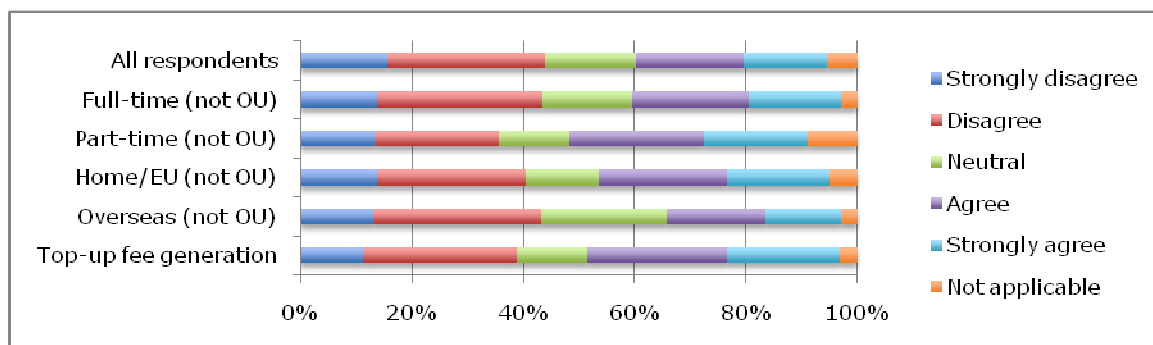


Table 5.4a "My financial situation has negatively affected the amount of time and attention I am able to devote to postgraduate study"

"I feel that the cost of postgraduate studies is very high and it does have a negative impact on the postgraduate experience and it has made it very difficult to focus on the work at times as I have had to have numerous jobs in order to make ends meet throughout the year"

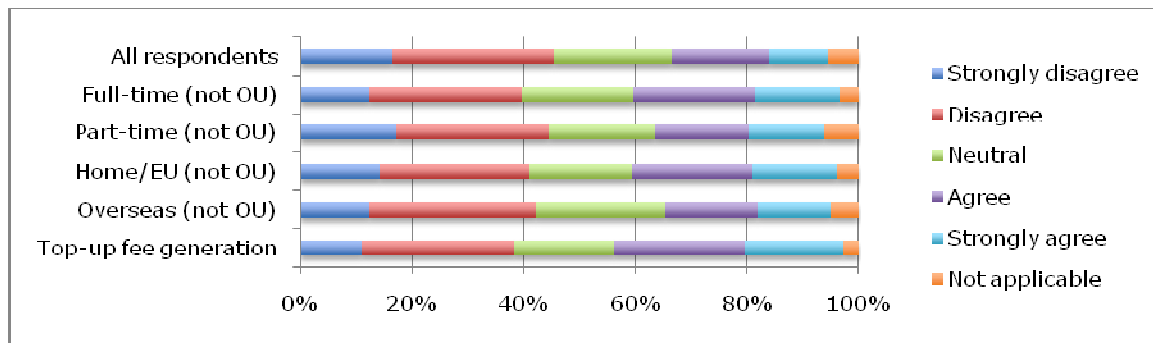


Table 5.5a "My financial situation has negatively affected my postgraduate student experience"

The value of postgraduate study

Postgraduate education provides students with opportunities to pursue the subjects they love in depth, to develop their critical faculties and think more deeply than undergraduate educational opportunities offer. However, given the amount of time and money invested, it would be disingenuous to pretend that educational benefits are the only value sought from taught postgraduate education by students.

We wanted to understand how students value their postgraduate education, and to what extent. Even more, we wanted to get a sense of whether students feel their investment is 'worth it', whatever that may mean for them personally.

We asked three different 'value' questions, one about educational benefits, one about employment outcomes, and one about value for money.

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	8	15.6	73.3
FT (not OU)	12	19.6	66.4
PT (not OU)	4.8	16.5	75.5
UK/EU (not OU)	9.6	18.2	69.7
O'seas (not OU)	11.3	20.1	66.2
Top-up fee gen.	9.7	17.7	70.6

Table 5.6b "The educational benefits of postgraduate study are worth it considering the time and money I have put in"

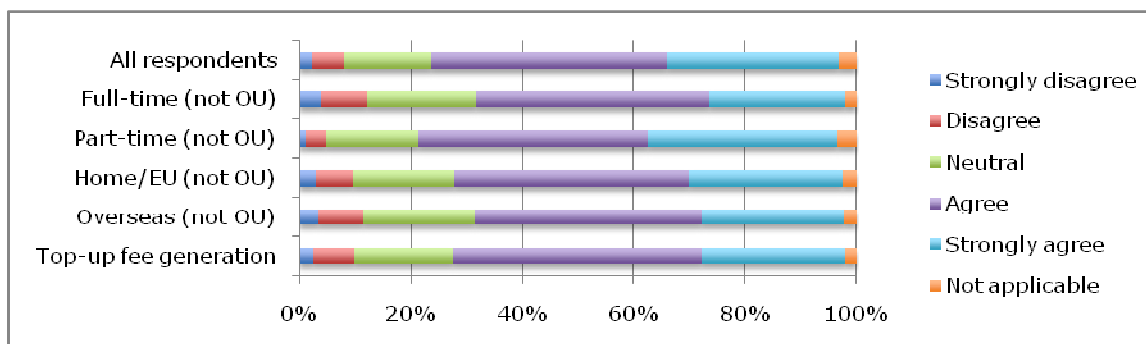


Table 5.6a "The educational benefits of postgraduate study are worth it considering the time and money I have put in"

The majority of respondents agree (and significant numbers strongly agree) that their postgraduate course is worth it from an educational perspective, with full-time respondents somewhat less likely to agree than part-time respondents.

It is important to recognise that employment outcomes for those studying postgraduate courses may include more than a higher salary. Greater responsibility, opportunities to utilise specialist skills sets, and higher status in certain kinds of workplace may also be anticipated by those with postgraduate qualifications, even where there is little or no difference in the salary offered to graduates and postgraduates. More work could be done in this area.

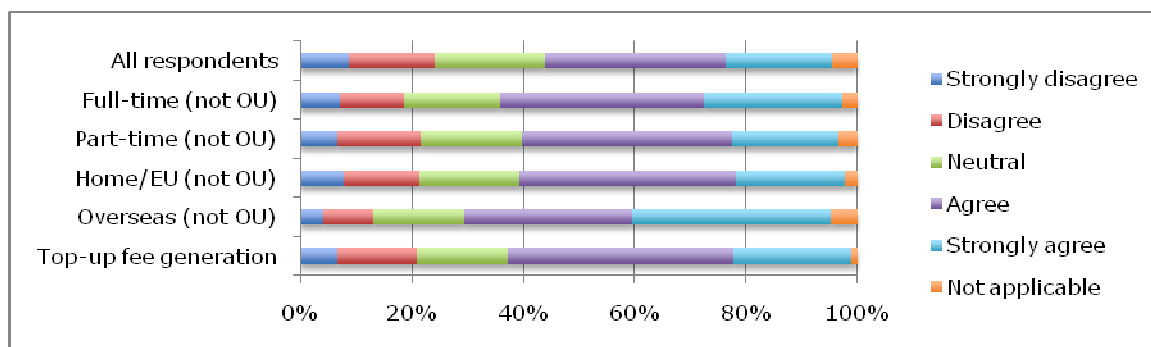


Table 5.7a "I expect to recoup my investment in postgraduate study through enhanced salary/improved employment outcomes"

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	24.1	19.7	51.8
FT (not OU)	18.5	17.4	61.5
PT (not OU)	21.5	18.2	57.1
UK/EU (not OU)	21.3	18.1	58.3
O'seas (not OU)	13.1	16.2	66
Top-up fee gen.	20.8	16.4	61.7

Table 5.7b "I expect to recoup my investment in postgraduate study through enhanced salary/improved employment outcomes"

Somewhat lower numbers of respondents are positive about recouping their investment in the employment market. Overseas students are the most positive, perhaps reflecting a level of variation in motivation for postgraduate study for this cohort as compared to all respondents.

In some cases, of course, respondents will have chosen to undertake postgraduate study for pleasure or interest, rather than for career purposes. But some open-text comments indicate a diminishing confidence in career outcomes in light of economic circumstances in the UK.

"When I started the course I felt confident that it would improve my employment opportunities. But now with the economic crisis I feel very frightened that it will have no impact"

Cohort	% SD/D	% neutral	% A/SA
All	19.7	25.5	53.9
FT (not OU)	28.5	26.6	44.3
PT (not OU)	21.2	23.2	54.4
UK/EU (not OU)	27.1	24.8	47.5
O'seas (not OU)	24.7	28.8	45.2
Top-up fee gen.	31.6	25.5	43

Table 5.8b "My postgraduate course is good value for money"

Very low numbers – under half for all but part-time students – agree that their course is good value for money.

The top-up fee generation is least likely to agree on this question, with nearly a third disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that their course is good value for money.

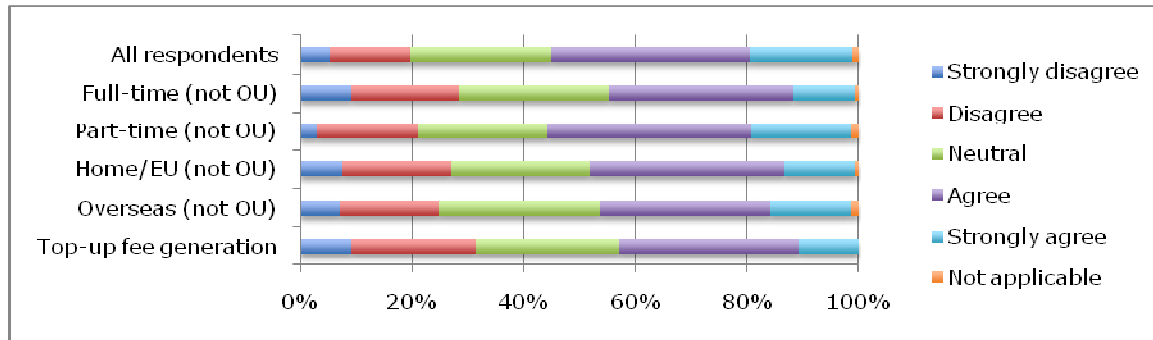


Table 5.8a "My postgraduate course is good value for money"

Overall, the attitudes questions present a mixed picture. By a slim margin, respondents consider that postgraduate study is worth the investment of time and money, for both education-related and career-related outcomes. Likewise, the proportion of respondents who are prepared to claim that their financial situation has directly negatively affected their experience is not a majority.

However, the precarious balance of these figures indicate that if postgraduate study were to become more expensive, finance were to become more inaccessible, if the postgraduate employment market were to slump or the quality of provision were to decrease (if institutions took on greater numbers of postgraduate students, for example), these figures could easily slip in the opposite direction.

6. Some personal stories

Throughout this report we have interspersed comments from respondents to the survey, giving their experience and opinions in their own voices. We received hundreds of comments – not all of which we could print.

Below, we have copied a selection of accounts from respondents whose comments we could not include earlier in the report. We hugely appreciate the level of thought that these respondents have given to our questions, and feel that they should have the chance to make their opinions known.

"Living on £50-60 a month did help me lose weight, but still it would be an experience I would like to be without"

"I don't know how widely held this opinion is, but it seems to me that postgraduate study is still treated as a surplus to requirements in the UK. What I mean by that is that it is not always valued as an option for people to pursue; added to the fact that it is extremely financially prohibitive, it is therefore an irony that so many people are undertaking it. As they are however, both the financial constraints and more general attitudes pertaining to it need to change. Not an easy task, I appreciate"

"I found it hard that prior to starting my post graduate Masters I was receiving over £60 a week on job seekers allowance. Once I became a student, I did not receive any kind of state benefit even though I was trying to better myself by undertaking the course. This angered and frustrated me. Surely, there should be some form of financial assistance for post-graduate students?"

"The lack of financial support, bank loans notwithstanding, for postgraduate study in this country is appalling. International students that I know receive grants and generous loans, and yet there is very little for a UK citizen. This leads to a highly polarised community within post-graduate study, where students come from very well-off backgrounds, and are completely funded by their parents. It leaves genuinely self-funded people like myself at a distinct disadvantage, and will leave me with debts that may take 10 years to be rid of"

"I think that it's important that everyone contributes at least a little in financial terms towards their postgrad course. It's unrealistic to expect high quality education to come completely free and I think the universities would really suffer if we tried to abolish tuition fees altogether. It's just not realistic (unless you are prepared to compromise on quality of teaching and research opportunities)."

"The finance department of my university...was extremely difficult about my using a career development loan to fund my course, and harassed me with threatening letters, because my loan provider pays the fee instalments twice a year rather than once a term. Other postgraduate students with CDLs at [my institution] have had similar experiences"

"The cost of my course was vastly inflated due to it being a compulsory qualification to become a lawyer. The Universities have a monopoly as providers and the cost goes up despite the quality of teaching and content being fairly poor"

"Funding my MA took over my life, I worked 20 different jobs to get through it. Universities need to be more understanding that some students may reach a position where they are unable to take time of work to study. My supervisors made me re-start my dissertation 7 weeks before the hand in date, despite the fact that I had just started a new full time job, so it's likely I'll fail"

"I started a masters sometime ago but could not afford to finish it. I think that other subjects than the ones the commercial world values (i.e. can get funding for) are just as important in giving us as human beings a more rounded experience of the world. As it stands it feels to me that only lucrative subjects will get funded as time goes on and this can only give a skewed impression of what human beings are truly capable of. This scares me more than anything else about the financial aspects of academia, especially at postgraduate level"

"I would like to register a certain degree of discontent with the nature and phrasing of the questions. I would to make emphatically clear that postgraduate study, and Higher Education more generally, should NOT be seen to run according to an 'investment/return' model. The insidious, neoliberal logic of competition must be kept OUT of universities if they are to survive as social institutions which facilitate genuinely critical, self-reflexive modes of thought and engagement"

"I would just like to be able to study and not worry about how I am feeding us and paying for the broadband which is a necessity"

"My results may not be representative of other students; I am very fortunate that my husband works full-time as a university lecturer, and my part-time job is well paid. If I did not have my husband's support my answers would have been very different concerning my financial situation!"

"Please raise the student nursing bursary in Wales. We are living off £500 per month and having to work full time hours during our course which leaves little time to have a job to help pay for rent, bills etc. As we have a bursary we are not entitled to student loans so have to lend money with higher APR, this isn't fair! We are helping people and saving lives and yet we struggle to pay for the basics such as food let alone educational books. Would you like to work full time hours and be paid less than the minimum wage? People claiming job seekers allowance receive a higher weekly income than a student nurse working full time!!!!"

"My course is absolutely crap. I am simply paying £4000 for a piece of paper!"

"To study is a privilege that can be hard to access if you are poor. Money should not dictate access to education. Yet, for less affluent families, the need to work can hamper or prevent access to post 16 education, and hence potential life chances can be limited"

"Part-time students get a poor deal as a whole. Often courses/modules they want to take are not running in the evening or are not available to part-time study. As a group, part-time people are often "forgotten" about and you have to work really hard to get the necessary information you need to succeed in your study. It took 10 weeks for [the VLE for my course] to get up and running (?) I was told all lecture notes would be posted on there plus additional information - there has been no notes or any other information on my site - its empty. This is very disappointing and, in a way demoralising. I think as MATURE, PARTTIME STUDENT YOU FEEL AS IF YOU ARE REALLY A NUISANCE AND NOT A PROPER PARTICIPANT OF THE STUDENT BODY"

"The benefits, either financial or knowledge-based, of post-grad study are not made clear"

"I don't understand why PG study is so much more expensive than undergraduate courses of similar length"

"I couldn't have started my MSc without it being funded by my employer, however this limited my choice of course and the venue, and had the university been completely honest about what I would be learning and how many hours was really required then I wouldn't have agreed to do it at all"

"I am a mature student (63) doing what I wish I could have done 40 years ago when working class women found it extremely difficult to get a higher education. I'm doing it for the personal satisfaction and have kept on working to pay for it"

"There were many conferences and seminars that I could not attend because of the attitude of my employers: scheduled classes were acceptable reasons not to work at a particular time, other aspects of the course were not"

"I would have loved to study full time. That was never an option because I have no other source of income or funding and I need to work...I have rather been cast adrift on a very expensive boat, loving the journey, but without many navigational aids. I HOPE I find the right destination, because the cost means that this is one, last, shot for me. Why would any government assume that education is a luxury? As the cliché says; if you think education is expensive ... try ignorance. It feels as if there has been an ideological shift, paradoxically arguing for 50% plus take up of Higher Education, and then financially penalising those who embrace its possibilities. And, of course, that most affects those with least money"

Conclusions

Before we undertook this study it was already widely known – if barely acknowledged – that postgraduate study is an expensive undertaking and that individual students carry a very high proportion of the costs. Moreover, while some taught postgraduate students may be able to access help in the form of a funding grant, the vast majority of taught postgraduate students have no access to sources of financial support or credit. Even where students are able to access funds, in many cases, these funds are not sufficient to cover the full cost of postgraduate study.

On access to postgraduate study

Our survey findings help to demonstrate that while funding and finance is unlikely to be the sole determinant of access to postgraduate study, it is certainly a crucial indicator of who is able to undertake a taught postgraduate course.

60.3% of respondents said that finance was a major consideration in considering whether to undertake postgraduate study, rising to 70% of full-time respondents.

Of those students who receive some form of financial help with the cost of their studies 52.3% said that postgraduate study would not have been an option for them if they had not received that support.

The majority of self-funded students rely on personal savings or help from family to fund their course. In some cases, students are funding their course in part from highly unstable sources of funding such as an overdraft or credit card.

While the financial help available for taught postgraduate students is so limited there will be students with the desire and ability to undertake taught postgraduate study, but without the financial means to do so, making questions of cultural and social capital almost irrelevant to the discussion. Raising aspirations and improving information and guidance would be of no use to students who fundamentally cannot afford to undertake postgraduate study.

On availability of information on funding and finance

Findings on the availability of information are somewhat mixed, suggesting that this is an area in which more work would be valuable. Certainly, there is room for improvement in access to useful information about finance and funding.

Only 30.7% of respondents agree that access to information about finance and funding is easily accessible.

40.8% of respondents said that their course was more expensive than expected, particularly full-time and overseas students. Students should be aware of how much they will have to spend before they apply for their course, and certainly before taking up their place.

Our questions about on-course costs demonstrates that postgraduate students can expect to be faced with a number of course costs, especially costs of books, travel, and printing and photocopying that may or may not be well-publicised and explained in advance. Around a quarter of non-Open University respondents said that it was not straightforward to find out course costs in advance.

Well over half of respondents said that they did not know whether their institution offers help with costs to postgraduate students. Moreover, the kinds of help suggested, such as small

grants and bursaries, printing allowances and book grants are the kinds of help that would make postgraduate study a little easier. Where these are offered to undergraduate students, they should also be offered to postgraduate students.

On the effect of financial issues on course experience

Financial concerns can impact on the amount of time available to devote to the course, and can also have a negative effect on the student experience, as postgraduates take up time in employment that they could spend on study, or on engaging with student life.

This is particularly pertinent for the generation of current postgraduate students who have come through top-up fees. This generation is the most likely to have debt, has the highest levels of debt, is the most likely to be concerned about debt, and is the most likely to report a negative impact of financial concerns on course and student experience.

In a highly concentrated, advanced level of study such as a taught Masters, students have limited time to devote to other things, yet significant numbers who are notionally registered on a full-time programme are in employment alongside postgraduate study.

Self-funded full-time students are more likely to be in employment than those who receive financial support, and are also likely to work more hours per week. We see evidence of a two-tier system emerging, where those who have funding or financial support, even in the form of a loan, are more able to gain the benefits of postgraduate study.

On the value of postgraduate study

Despite all this, by and large, taught postgraduate students are inclined to see their course as a sound investment, by somewhat narrow margins. Of course, asking them again in five or ten years, when they have had the chance to experience the impact of postgraduate study on them personally, could result in a different set of answers.

The educational value perceived to be gained from postgraduate study is higher than the prospective employment benefits. 73.3% agree that the educational benefits are worth the investment, while only 51.8% say they expect enhanced employment outcomes (which is somewhat higher for overseas students at 66%).

However, just 53.9% agree that their course is good value for money, dropping to only 43% of top-up fee generation respondents. This is a dangerous situation for the taught postgraduate market, and suggests that institutions must not depend on recruiting taught postgraduate students as a means of making up for government cuts, unless they can be very sure that they will deliver a course of sufficient quality to justify the investment of students.

What can be done?

The outcomes of the Browne review show us how easy it is for postgraduate provision to be overlooked and ignored. We must continue to challenge the false perception that postgraduate education is accessible and should depend entirely on private finance.

How can we do this?

Raise awareness Although everyone knows that taught postgraduate study is a struggle, and is unfair, nobody has yet made the case for why and how this is so. We need to make a big noise about postgraduate funding and finance and, over time, articulate and campaign for a better solution than the current market-based system. Now we have the beginnings of an evidence base, we can make our case with confidence.

Build the postgraduate student voice Postgraduate students are unfairly treated because they are not always given a collective voice to make their complaints heard. This is exacerbated by a feeling of needing to be loyal to their institution in the case of those who are lucky enough to have been funded, and a lack of time for those who also have to work to fund their studies. These obligations effectively render postgraduates voiceless. It is vital that students' unions keep working to defend and extend the rights of postgraduate students to a quality student experience.

Identify short- and medium-term goals We need to find ways to make the postgraduate financial experience easier, assuming the fees and finance system stays the same for the foreseeable future. Students' unions could be putting pressure on institutions to give clear, comprehensive advice about course costs, to institute fair and manageable fee payment systems, to provide low-cost accommodation (including accommodation suitable for families) and, where possible, to provide hardship loans, printing allowances and so on. In the medium term, we need to look harder at access to postgraduate study, and understand better how people choose to undertake a postgraduate course, and what kinds of advice they get. Long term we need to continue to campaign for the extension of student support systems to taught postgraduate students, and continue to build the evidence base to make our case.

Move towards a more holistic understanding of student finance Undergraduate education is still the biggest driver of social mobility in this country, and we are right to focus on top-up fees. But as education becomes more and more diverse, the undergraduate funding and finance system is just one aspect of a wider question: how do we ensure access to the right level and type of education for everyone who wants it, as fairly as possible? This question encompasses further education, adult and lifelong learning, and postgraduate education. All these elements of student finance affect each other, and we should evolve our thinking to reflect this.

Improve information We constantly hear government ministers talk about information, advice and guidance in schools and in further education colleges. We need to make the case for better information on postgraduate courses as well. Where universities are required to make information known to undergraduate students regarding contact hours, resources, course costs and names of tutors, these should apply to taught postgraduate courses also.

Taught postgraduate students on funding and finance
