

Review of post-18 education and funding

Launch of call for evidence

The Department for Education has launched a call for evidence, which will inform the review of post-18 tertiary education. The call for evidence confirms the review will include student maintenance support, in a win for our Poverty Commission campaign.

Background

As set out in our previous briefings (for [FE unions](#) and [HE unions](#)), the Prime Minister announced a review of post-18 tertiary education on review on 19 February 2018. The review process is expected to complete in early 2019.

The review will focus on four main areas:

1. Choice: identifying ways to help people make more effective choices between the different options available after 18
2. Value for money: looking at how students and graduates contribute to the cost of their studies
3. Skills provision: future-proofing the economy by making sure we have a post-18 education system that is providing the skills that employers need
4. Access: enabling people from all backgrounds to progress and succeed in post-18 education

The review will be conducted by the Department for Education (DfE), informed by an advisory panel chaired by Philip Augar.

The call for evidence

Today, the DfE launched a [call for evidence](#) to inform the review. Disappointingly, the period to respond is quite short, lasting only six weeks. The deadline for submissions of 2 May 2018. The Department says it is particularly keen to receive evidence from, among others, students and student representative bodies.

The call for evidence covers the following areas, over 16 separate questions:

- How to support young people in making effective choices between academic, technical and vocational routes after 18
- How to promote a more dynamic market in education and training provision
- How to ensure the post-18 education system is accessible to all
- How best to support education outcomes that deliver the skills the UK needs
- How the post-18 education system can best deliver value for money for graduates and the taxpayer

We can confirm that maintenance support is explicitly included in the call for evidence, as well as wider questions about the barriers faced

by those in accessing post-18 tertiary education. This is a significant win for the student movement, and vindicates the Poverty Commission campaign. The final report of the Commission, which we will publish ahead of the deadline for SUs to use, will feed directly into this call for evidence.

As expected, the call for evidence underlines certain starting assumptions on the part of the Government, including the need to create markets in further and higher education, and the principle of some contribution by the individual to the cost of their education. NUS will be challenging these assumptions in its evidence.

What happens now

This is a major opportunity to shape student funding policy in England for years to come. Students' unions had a significant influence on the regulatory framework published by the Office for Students, demonstrating that our collective power can make a difference if we engage in these processes. We need as many SUs as possible to respond and will be supporting SUs to do so.

As well as publishing the Poverty Commission findings, NUS will draft a response to the call for evidence which we will share with students' unions ahead of the deadline. We will ensure that the call for evidence can be discussed at National Conference.

Alongside the call for evidence, the Government has announced the creation of three 'reference groups' which it will use to engage with students, providers and employers. NUS expects to be represented on the student group.

We will also continue to meet with ministers, MPs, and the review advisory panel and are working to find ways in which the review advisory panel can engage directly with students and student officers in addition to the reference group.

We will provide further briefings and resources in due course.

Getting in touch

If you would like any further information then please contact campaigns@nus.org.uk or for press support please contact pressoffice@nus.org.uk.