

Tertiary Education Funding Review

What it means for students

Last year, as part of the Conservative Party manifesto a student funding review of higher education was listed. In October 2017, the Prime Minister announced a major review of university funding and student finance. Today, the Prime Minister launched the review of Post-18 education.

Summary

The Prime Minister has launched a major review of Post-18 education and student funding. As expected, there were a few references to small aspects of further education but with no overall commitment to support the sector. Much emphasis instead, was placed on universities and higher education funding. The below outlines in more detail what has been announced and the implications this will have on students.

Review process:

The Prime Minister outlined the review in today's launch. An independent panel, chaired by Philip Augar, will provide input into the review on the four issues outlined below. Philip is an author and former equities broker.

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 panel is set to publish a report at an interim stage (which has not been announced), before the Government concludes the overall review in early 2019.

What does this mean for further education?

This review will have a number of implications on funding and student finance for tertiary education. The Prime Minister admitted that the UK's higher education system is by far one of the "most expensive" and in calling for this review, it is hoped that the whole of tertiary education will be made more accessible for all students, regardless of background and class.

There was a lot of focus on the future of further technical and vocational education and training, as highlighted in today's announcement. The Prime Minister spoke of the importance technical education in light of Brexit and the Industrial Strategy in providing the necessary skills and training students need to succeed.

As part of this review, universities, colleges and also, institutes of technologies and apprenticeship providers will all be considered in understanding how the post-18 education system can be "truly joined up."

Whilst there was much speculation that further detail would emerge with regard to

differential tuition fee rates, interest rates on student loans, and maintenance support.

NUS is disappointed however, that there was little reference given to student support and maintenance in today's announcement, for which we are committed to ensuring that this is recognised as an urgent issue for students.

What happens now?

We will continue to monitor developments as and when they are announced, but as an initial response we are taking the following actions and steps:

- NUS President Shakira Martin and Vice-President, HE, Amatey Doku are urgently meeting with Universities Minister Sam Gyimah MP this week to discuss the review process and voice the concerns and implications this has on students.

- NUS Vice-President, Emily Chapman has written to the Skills Minister, Anne Milton MP, requesting an urgent meeting.
- We are writing to the Prime Minister calling for the student voice to be central to the review process and our disappointment at the lack of importance maintenance support

Student engagement and influencing

As further detail of the review is announced, NUS will be producing resources for students and students' unions so you can engage with the process and MPs to help shape the review

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.