

I've had some challenges with distribution lists, so if you missed the last couple of these, many apologies and the links are here:

<https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/professionalservices/ovc/policyandpublicaffairsatbu/whatsappening/policyupdates/>. Highlights last week were

[UUK's social mobility report](#) and the week before noted the [TEF specification](#) and the [NSS questions](#).

The **HE and Research Bill** has [finished its committee stage with very few amendments](#) – it is anticipated that the real debate has been saved for the Lords, and possibly also the Commons (as amendments are only supposed to be debated once), so although there has been disappointment in some circles that the bill has not had a very hard time, that may still be to come. The one change that has received a lot of publicity is the NSS campaign to ensure that there is student representation in the OfS – Justine Greening confirmed on 10 October that the Office for Students [must have student representation](#), and that the government “will take every opportunity to embed student engagement in the culture and structure of the new organisation”. Apparently this is not included in the Bill to avoid being “over-prescriptive”. This issue does seem to have been handled rather clumsily and become a distraction from other issues. I was at a conference earlier this week when Sorana Vieru talked about that issue for most of her slot (unsurprisingly) – which seems like an opportunity lost when we could have been discussing the student voice in the TEF instead.

The big **Brexit** story for universities this week was the [announcement](#) that students from the EU starting their courses in the 17/18 academic year would be able to pay home fees for the duration of their courses and remain eligible for loans and grants as home students are. This is very welcome news as the recruitment cycle for that year opens and something the sector has been calling for since the announcement was made covering 16/17 in July. The announcement was widely welcomed with statements from the [mission groups](#) and others. However, it seems likely that we will be leaving the EU by March 2018 at the latest and so while there may be another follow up announcement for September 2018 starts, that may be the end of it now. After Brexit, unless a special deal is agreed with the EU, students from the EU will probably have to be treated like other international students and the government will no longer provide loans and grants.

After March 2019, EU students may also, unless special terms are agreed with the EU, be subject to the new immigration rules announced last week. The consultation on this is expected soon. However, in the meantime the controversy about the impact and need for controls on international students continues:

- [UUK have issued a new poll by ComRes](#) saying that “only a quarter (24%) of British adults think of international students as immigrants. Of those that expressed a view, 75% say they would like to see the same number, or more, international students in the UK, a figure which jumped to 87% once information on the economic benefits of international students was provided. The poll also revealed that the overwhelming majority of the British public (91%) think that international students should be able to stay and work in the UK for a period of time after they have completed their study”.
- A “secret report” claims that only 1% of students overstay their visas, according to [The Times](#). Read the [PIE News report](#) here. The government have denied the report and also say that there is insufficient data to know what really happens.
- [Press coverage](#) and [commentary](#) on this issue has continued – with it still not being any clearer what Amber Rudd meant when she linked visas to quality – we will probably need to wait for the consultation to see what the plan is.
- [“Financing international student mobility”](#), the second chapter of Grant Thornton’s Higher Education report 2016 was published. The first chapter, “The politics of student mobility”, which examined how government policy across the world has impacted universities, was published in July. The report recommends that HEIs provide incentives to support living costs for international students, as well as learning from other sectors.

Jo Johnson has [written to Lord Stern](#) about the **Research Excellence Framework** and confirms a commitment to dual support and supporting excellence in research, and confirming the consultation on REF implementation “this Autumn”. HEFCE [have confirmed](#) this will be in November.

The Higher Education Policy Institute issued a [paper on “Protecting the public interest in Higher Education”](#). It proposes a number of changes to the HE bill – which may or may not be picked up, but also calls in particular for work on incorporating personal development and citizenship into the curriculum and ensuring that co-curricular and extra-curricular learning environments are recognised in the teaching excellence framework (TEF).

You can read about **current consultations** in our [consultation tracker here](#). We will be holding workshops to discuss our response to the **schools policy as it affects universities** on:

- Friday 4th November in Studland House S206 from 9.00-11.30
- Thursday 17th November in Christchurch House from 2.00-4.00

Please contact policy@bournemouth.ac.uk if you would like to attend one of these sessions and read a presentation about the [questions in the consultation here](#), and a specific presentation about the [questions relating to universities here](#). In the meantime, we would like to hear from you:

- How can universities work with schools to improve attainment in schools? Do you have experience of doing this?
- How could BU engage with local schools to improve attainment?
- What works in practice to improve attainment in schools?