

Dear all

Higher Education and Research Bill – the Bill continues its committee stage in the Lords, with long and lively debates. Only government amendments have been approved so far, apart from last week's amendment to clause 1. The list of amendments has continued to grow in the meantime, there is a genuine risk that they may not get through it all and run out of time. The next sessions are 23rd, 25th and 30th January.

Some interesting new proposed amendments over the last week:

- ensuring name and gender blind assessment on application and on marking for all student assessments at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels – Lord Desai
- power for the Office for Students (OfS) to initiate investigations (including a student perspective) into changes to the admissions system and the system of degree classification – Lord Lucas
- preventing changes to the repayment of loans – Lord Watson
- banning cheating services (see **Contract Cheating** below) – Lord Storey
- amending the 'balanced funding principle' to 'long-term, stable block grant' to facilitate strategic research development investment – Lord Stevenson
- reserving funding for Research England whenever new grants are awarded to UKRI - Lord Liddle

[Research Professional](#) cover the Minister's uncompromising stance towards amendments. They suggest the Government is listening and may yet propose amendments to address some of the issues raised by the Lords, but points out that there is a risk of further symbolic resistance as more Lords 'dig their heels in'.

Immigration

- in response to comments in the HERB debates in the Lords, when concerns were raised about using the TEF to limit student visas, Lord Younger [informed the House of Lords](#) during the HE bill committee stage that the government has "*no plans to cap the number of genuine students who can come to the UK to study, nor to limit an institution's ability to recruit genuine international students based on its teaching excellence framework rating or any other basis. This applies to all institutions, not just to members of the Russell group.*"
- The Home Affairs Committee invited written submissions for an [immigration inquiry](#) in December with a deadline of 20 January, however, it has been confirmed submission will be accepted after the deadline. BU is not proposing to respond to this as we already provided evidence on staff and student mobility after Brexit to the Education Committee, which is [continuing its hearings](#). The next one is on 25th January at UCL.

Research integrity select committee – A Commons Science and Technology Committee has launched an inquiry into [research integrity](#). The inquiry is accompanied by the recently published [POSTnote: Integrity in Research](#) which discusses the questionable practices and considers whether a regulatory body for UK research would be beneficial. The original committee investigation into peer review from 2010/11 is [here](#) which led UUK to set up [concordat to support research integrity](#). A call for written evidence to the Committee has been published. We will be working with RKEO to consider whether BU should submit evidence, please contact policy@bournemouth.ac.uk if you would like to be involved. Issues raised in include:

- The extent of the research integrity problem;
- Causes and drivers of recent trends;
- The effectiveness of controls/regulation (formal and informal), and what further measures if any are needed;
- What matters should be for the research/academic community to deal with, and which for Government.

Contract cheating - WonkHE reported on the difficulties in [preventing cheating](#) with the rise in companies offering one-off essays and dissertations. The BBC (May 2016) ran an [article](#) about a commercial essay writer motivated by revenge for believed racial discrimination and noted five methods universities can undertake to tackle plagiarism. Lord Storey is leading the campaign for a proposed

[amendment](#) within the HE and Research Bill which aims to make providing or advertising cheating services an offence, focussing on 'unfair disadvantage'. The Australian Government currently have a [national project](#) reporting in 2018 that aims to stamp out 'contract cheating'. Finally a [THE article](#) explains a new law may only have a deterrent effect; countries with contract cheating laws do not in practice have many successful prosecutions.

Digital skills crisis – The Government have published their [response](#) to the Science and Technology Select Committee's special report on the digital skills crisis within industry and teaching capacity within schools – it lists a number of areas that need focus: cyber-security, big data, the Internet of Things, mobile technology and e-commerce. There is a focus on degree apprenticeships, immigration and the [Shadbolt and Wakeham Reviews](#) of relevant degree provision.

Fees: the Government published a [Statutory Instrument](#) that allows institutions to increase tuition fees by inflation, this came into effect on 6 January 2017. This enables the first year of the TEF related fee increases – all institutions which have been designated as meeting expectations in year 1 of the TEF can now increase fees by inflation in September 2017. Some institutions have announced their intention to apply this to all students – including existing students – but BU will only change fees for new students. [You can read more about the process and background to this on the intranet.](#) The change went through as a formality – there is already legislation in place – but there are still amendments to be debated in the Higher Education and Research Bill seeking to break this link.

PM's Brexit speech - If you missed this, the main points of the PM's speech this week are below. Universities and research received a high number of positive mentions, which is encouraging:

- Leaving the single market and the customs union
- Not using any other existing model
- But would like a deal on customs tariffs and access to the single market
- MPs and peers will get a vote on final deal
- Not making huge contributions to the EU but may pay something to have access to the single market
- EU citizens welcome here but no guarantee – needs to be reciprocal
- Warm words about universities – hope for deal on participation in science and research

Industrial strategy - A Green Paper is expected around 23 January on the Government's industrial strategy. Meanwhile [Labour's Industrial Strategy Consultation](#) closes on 16 February.

New DLHE – Dan Cook writes for WonkHE on the [new DLHE](#) describing a centralised model aiming to achieve high response rates, allow for continuation of post-graduation support to alumni from HEIs, and exploring a dashboard so institutions have near-real time interaction with their data.

Widening Participation and Outreach

- HEFCE have published a [resource pool](#) covering a wide range of outreach initiatives all of which were funded by the National Networks for Collaborative Outreach.
- [Maddalaine Ansell has written](#) about the schools policy for Wonkhe. We are waiting for the government response to the recent schools consultation [-read more here.](#)

HESA 2015/16 staff data was released on 19th January.

- 49% (98,620) of academic staff are teaching and research
- 26% (52,590) teaching only
- 24% (48,645) research only

And:

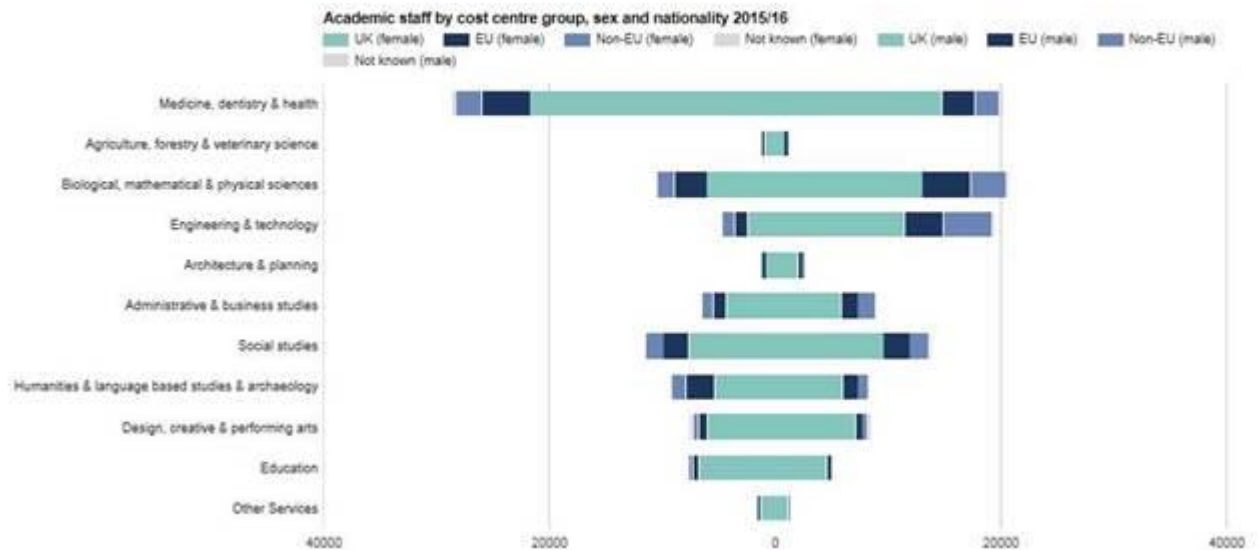
- 66% of academic staff were on permanent contract.
- 4% of academic staff were known to have a disability
- 15% of academic staff were BME (not knowns excluded)

Nationality of academic staff:

- 70% UK (139,910)
- 17% (33,735) EU (non-UK)
- 12% (24,535) non-EU (presumably international)

(Atypical contracts and not knowns account for the percentages not totalling 100%)

Academic staff by cost centres



Regards
Jane