

REF Review

The outcome of Lord Stern's independent review makes 12 recommendations for the future of the REF. Notably, the report suggests that all research active staff should be returned in the REF and should be allocated to a unit of assessment. You can view the report [here](#). [Wonkhe](#) has a piece which analyses how the sector has reacted to the recommendations.

Home Office

The Home Office released some updated guidance on Tier 4 of the points based system. The guidance reveals a two-year pilot scheme which eases visa rules for those applying to master's courses at the University of Bath, University of Cambridge, University of Oxford and Imperial College London. The pilot means that students applying to study a Masters course for 13 months or less at these institutions will be allowed to stay in the UK for six months after the end of their courses to find a graduate job here. You can view the guidance [here](#) (pg 92).

TEF

Chris Husbands, the Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University, has been named as the first chair of the Teaching Excellence Framework. Professor Husbands, will lead the assessment panel that will make decisions on university ratings in the second and third year of the TEF (2017-18 and 2018-19), which will decide whether universities are allowed to raise their fees in line with inflation in 2018-19 and 2019-20. [Chris Husbands appointed as TEF chair. \(THE\)](#).

The Department for Education

In the recent report by the Department for Education *Widening participation in higher education: 2016*, the government reveals that 85% of private school pupils went to higher education, compared with 62% of those from state schools by the age of 19 in 2013-14. The figures also reveal a drop from 66% to 62% in state school pupils progressing to university between 2012-2013 and 2013-2014. You can view the report [here](#).

Party Conferences

The 2016 Party conferences have been announced

- Green Party of England and Wales - Friday 2 September to Sunday 4 September 2016 at the University of Birmingham
- UKIP - Thursday 15 to Saturday 17 September at the Bournemouth International Centre, Bournemouth
- Liberal Democrats - Saturday 17 September to Wednesday 21 September at the Brighton Centre, Brighton
- Labour - Sunday 25 September to Wednesday 28 September 2016 at the ACC Liverpool, Liverpool
- Conservatives - Sunday 2 to Wednesday 5 October at International Convention Centre, Birmingham
- Scottish National Party - Thursday 13 to Saturday 15 October at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, Glasgow