

**Higher Education and Research Bill** - The bill will reach the report stage on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November, and a long list of new amendments have been proposed. The amended version of the bill following the committee stage is [here](#). The list of amendments is [here](#) (although it is being updated daily so best to look [here](#))

The government's own amendments were described by [Jo Johnson in a blog on Wonkhe](#) – an unusual and interesting step.

- At least one member will be added to the OfS board who has experience of representing the interests of students - which has been welcomed across the sector and especially by the NUS, who ran a high profile campaign on this issue
- The OfS would have a new duty to monitor the financial sustainability of the sector.
- Amendments to restrict the ability of the Secretary of State to frame guidance etc in relation to particular course of study that would lead to the OfS to perform a function in a way which prohibits or requires the provision of a particular course of study.
- The requirement for all registered providers to publish student protection plans and bring them to students' attention. How this develops is likely to be linked to the separate consultation on credit transfer - we are expecting a [response on this soon](#)
- Changes relating to UKRI including the addition of postgraduate training in UKRI's functions.

The other amendments proposed are also interesting – including amendments relating to Brexit and immigration issues, and student loans, rather than matters directly covered by the Bill, but which show the direction that the debate may be going to take – e.g. on student loans, using TEF as a measure of quality for immigration controls on student numbers, monitoring international staff and student numbers and requiring Parliamentary approval for the TEF. See our summary on the intranet pages [here](#)

The House of Commons library produced a useful [briefing](#) on the committee stage of the HERB on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The written evidence and transcripts of the Committee's sittings are available on the [Higher Education and Research Bill 2016-17](#) page of the Parliament website. This includes BU's submission – we were one of only 11 HE institutions to submit individual responses (out of 63 sets of evidence).

Separately, the government [published guidance](#) on how UKRI and the OfS would work together.

**Teaching Excellence Framework** - The [HEA have published their literature review](#) on “defining and demonstrating quality teaching and impact in HE” – which was announced in March when we were all grappling with the TEF year 2 technical consultation. It starts rather sadly, noting “the lack of robust empirical evidence found by this review” “with the literature dominated by opinion pieces based on secondary, documentary analysis rather than rigorous comparison group studies.” The review therefore points for a need for more implementation research but also a shared understanding on what “quality teaching” in HE is and why it matters, and then on how to measure it. With that caveat in mind, it sets out what the indicators are, from the literature, showing an interesting correlation with TEF criteria. I've put the list of criteria on the [TEF pages on the intranet](#). The review looks at student/alumni feedback as measure of quality and refers to a number of publications that question whether student satisfaction is a good proxy for quality, although it may support quality in institutions as a robust mechanism for feedback.

**Brexit** - The House of Commons Science and Technology committee's report into leaving the EU [has been published](#). Read my blog on the [BU research blog](#) here – it calls for more reassurance on staff mobility and funding and a Chief Scientific Adviser in the Department for Exiting the EU.

**International Students** - There has been much activity this week – some of it is reflected in the amendments to the HE and Research Bill as noted above – many of those filing amendments to the Bill spoke in the Westminster Hall debate

- The House of Lords discussed overseas students on 17<sup>th</sup> November (see [Hansard here](#)). The discussion included a great deal of support for allowing international students to come to the UK, support for removing them from the migration statistics, and criticism of suggestions that quality measures (including the TEF) should be used as a mechanism to determine policy. A better measure of actual overstayers (rather than the current estimates) would be helpful. There was much concern about the UK sending unfriendly messages to the rest of the world.
- There was a Westminster Hall debate on 16<sup>th</sup> November – you can read the [House of Commons briefing paper on international students](#) prepared for that debate. During that debate ([see Hansard here](#)):
  - Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott confirmed Labour policy was to remove international students from Home Office migration statistics, saying not only would this make the statistics more accurate in relation to people who were subject to immigration legislation but it would also "contribute to the detoxification of this area of British society and political life".
  - Stuart C McDonald (SNP, Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East) He thought the Government's official ambition for education exports to be worth £30bn by 2020 was unlikely to be met, and questioned the accuracy of the international passenger survey statistics that 90,000 students were not leaving when their courses ended
  - There were comments criticising the negative rhetoric around immigration generally

**University finance** – UUK have launched an [interactive tool](#) looking at University spending - responding to the [HEPI student experience survey](#) last year that reported that 75% of students did not feel that they have enough information on where their fees are spent – something that is of concern when so many students also have concerns about value for money (only a third said that they are receiving good or very good value for money) – something that is cited by the government regularly. It is worth noting that BU has a very clear explanation of [our own finances](#) on the website that was developed alongside SUBU last year to make sure that we are presenting helpful information in a clear way.

**Social mobility and widening participation** - A [report by the Social Mobility Commission](#) was issued this week. The report includes a series of conclusions and recommendations.

- Parenting and Early Years – a focus on early intervention at 2 to stop pupils falling behind before they even start school, with better support for parents
- Schools – GCSE attainment for the disadvantaged (as measured by those on free school meals) indicates the challenge, as well as drop out rates in post-16 education. Disadvantaged areas have more inadequate schools. The report recommends, amongst other things, that the attainment gap for disadvantaged children

should be the main focus, with a strong geographical focus on the local authority areas that perform worst

- Post 16 Education and Training – the report highlights the same issues for students from disadvantaged backgrounds in terms of drop out rates and attainment, and also local access to HE – it recommends that UCAS should be replaced by a combined system that includes vocational as well as HE options, introducing a DLHE-style metric for schools that they would be accountable for, support 6<sup>th</sup> form provision  
Note that locally, Hampshire, Portsmouth, Exeter and parts of North Devon are identified as an area where there is a concern about sixth form places.

**And, specifically relevant to universities, introduce an annual social mobility league table for universities, and ensure that there is HE local provision in all areas of the country**

Jobs, careers, and earnings: define social obligations for employers, build job opportunities in social mobility cold spots, working with LEPs, employers and councils, and ban unpaid internships.

- Housing: build more homes, introduce tax incentives for longer term tenancies

The prior attainment issue (at GCSE) affecting HE access is one that has been highlighted a lot recently – and is one of the factors behind the schools policy that is currently out for consultation.

HE “cold spots” have also been identified as an issue, and the focus on local geography is consistent with the approach that is being taken by the government, most recently with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, targeting specific post-codes and linked to measureable outcomes, and [Justine Greening's announcement](#) of new “opportunity areas” at the Conservative Party conference, so it will be interesting to see what the reaction is.

### **Student Finance - consultations**

The government consulted in 2015 about extending loans to PGR students on means-tested basis and announced with the 2016 budget that they would launch a technical consultation on the detail, which has been launched with a closing date of 16th December 2016 ([Consultation on postgraduate doctoral loans](#)). BU is preparing a response to this consultation - please contact [policy@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:policy@bournemouth.ac.uk) if you would like to be involved and read the summary [here](#).

In the Autumn Statement in 2015 the Government announced it would introduce new undergraduate part-time maintenance loans to support the cost of living while studying. The [Part-time Maintenance Loans Consultation](#) seeks views and evidence on the introduction of the part-time maintenance loan. Please contact [policy@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:policy@bournemouth.ac.uk) if you would like to contribute and read the summary [here](#). The consultation closes on 16th December 2016.