

**Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:
Financial sustainability and long-term funding of UK higher education**

Timing: Morning, Friday, 14th November 2025

*****Taking place online*****

Draft agenda subject to change



- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Higher education funding and priorities for the sector**
Sarah Bevan, Head, Funding Policy, Universities UK
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Immediate priorities for sector financial sustainability and stability**
assessing long-term funding frameworks | tuition fee and maintenance loan reform | options for indexation, targeted grants, and other adjustments | supporting access, participation, and progression | addressing disparities across disciplines and regions | managing rising staffing, infrastructure, and technology costs | income volatility from student recruitment and research funding | structural risks from demographic shifts | managing financial stress and insolvency risk highlighted by the Office for Students | supporting high-cost and strategically important provision | future strategy for international student income | compliance with immigration rules and diversification of income | brand positioning and global competitiveness
Olivia Davies, President, Royal Holloway Students' Union
Matthew Paterson, Vice President, Education, Royal Holloway Students' Union
Senior representative, university
Senior commentator
- 9.45 **Managing financial stress, insolvency risk, and options for market exit**
Charlotte Corrish, Head, Public Policy, Office of the Independent Adjudicator
Helen Baird, Managing Consultant, SUMS Consulting
- 9.55 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **'Assessing strategic priorities for universities and the UK Government into the future'**
Professor Christopher Millward, Professor of Practice in Education Policy, University of Birmingham
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.40 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.45 Break
- 10.55 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.00 **Alternative funding models and longer-term approaches to financial sustainability**
options for new funding settlements | impact of research and development commitments from the 2025 Spending Review | aligning funding approaches with Industrial Strategy priorities | balancing public and private contributions | sustaining strategically important teaching and research | securing provision in vulnerable subjects
Baz Ramaiah, Head, Policy and Research, Million Plus
Joanna Burton, Head of Policy, Higher Education, Russell Group
- 11.20 **Strategies for income diversification and strengthening sector resilience**
enabling growth of commercial and international income streams | scaling-up spinouts, short courses, and transnational delivery | research commercialisation and international ventures | strengthening industry and business partnerships | addressing barriers and enablers to commercialisation | governance and investment priorities for sustainable diversification | strategic partnerships and lessons from other jurisdictions | aligning diversification with institutional resilience goals
Damian Mole, Founder, Kynos Therapeutics; and Professor, Surgery, University of Edinburgh
Thomas Bright, Senior Audit Manager, RSM UK
Professor Mandy Parkinson, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor, Knowledge Exchange, University of Salford
Senior representative, industry
- 11.40 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.05 **Priorities for sector restructuring and long-term financial sustainability**
Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura, Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, University of Kent
- 12.15 **Financial regulation, governance, and long-term sustainability of UK higher education**
scope and coordination of financial regulation | intervention triggers and provider expectations | coordination between regulators and adequacy of current frameworks for systemic risk | balancing autonomy, sustainability, and accountability | sustaining long-term global positioning of UK universities | maintaining competitiveness internationally | adapting to priorities in the Immigration White Paper | reducing reliance on international students while sustaining attractiveness | cost-efficiency in estates and technology investment for net zero | assessing the future of tuition fees in the long-term
Johnny Rich, Higher Education Policy Specialist
Bob Savill, Head, Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Chichester
Ash Scholz, President, Edinburgh University Students' Association
- 12.30 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Higher Education Forum