

Westminster Higher Education Forum Keynote Seminar

The future for Postgraduate Taught education: funding, choice and student experience

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 22nd October 2015

Venue: Sixty One Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET



WESTMINSTER
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FORUM

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Professor Helen Atkinson, Head of the Department of Engineering, University of Leicester; Chair, Perkins Task Group on Specialist Skills and former President, UK Engineering Professors' Council
- 9.05 - 9.55 **The impact of the introduction of PGT loans on students and the sector**
How well does the £10,000 loan cap reflect the reality of the costs of PGT study? How justified are concerns that an increase in funding for PGT students will lead to a rise in course fees, and how can these concerns be addressed? To what extent will greater access to funding affect levels of fee competition between institutions? Is there a need for a commercial or alternative funding provider to supplement government funding levels? To what extent will an increased availability of PGT funding increase enrolment numbers of PGT courses, and what impact will this have on institutions? In light of pre-existing debt from undergraduate courses, will potential PGT students be deterred from taking out an additional student loan? How can widening participation be defined in a PGT context, and how can these students be best provided with additional support? What step can institutions and government take to address concerns that imposing an age limit of 30 on PGT loans is discriminatory and how can the funding gap for these students be resolved?
Mahamid Ahmed, Postgraduate Taught Officer, National Union of Students
Dr Faye Taylor, Policy and Projects Manager, University Alliance
Ben Jordan, Senior Policy Executive, UCAS
Juan Guerra, Chief Executive Officer and Founder, StudentFunder
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.55 - 10.25 **How people make decisions about postgraduate study**
Dr Robin Mellors-Bourne, Research Director & Acting Chief Executive, CRAC
Dr Fiona Groenhout, Graduate Access Manager, Graduate Admissions and Funding, University of Oxford
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.25 - 10.55 **'Steps to Postgraduate Study' and improving information accessibility**
Jennifer Sadler, Higher Education Policy Adviser, HEFCE
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.55 - 11.15 **Efficient provision of information in practice**
Jayne Rowley, Director of Business Services, HECSU/Graduate Prospects
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.15 - 11.20 **Chair's closing remarks**
Professor Helen Atkinson, Head of the Department of Engineering, University of Leicester; Chair, Perkins Task Group on Specialist Skills and former President, UK Engineering Professors' Council
- 11.20 - 11.50 Coffee
- 11.50 - 11.55 **Chair's opening remarks**
Chris Evans MP, Member, All-Party Parliamentary University Group
- 11.55 - 12.05 **What do PGT students want from their university experience?**
Jason Leman, Surveys Officer, Higher Education Academy
- 12.05 - 12.55 **Supporting PGT students' experience and improving their employability prospects**
What more can institutions do to ensure a high quality student experience for PGT students, what can be learnt from best practice in this area - for example in supporting integration into the student community? How might the current levels of pastoral support provided to PGT students be improved; including mature, part time and international students? What factors are driving the fall in part time PGT student numbers, and how can universities act to increase numbers of part time applicants? Which PGT qualifications are of greatest value to the labour market and how can institutions and employers co-operate to ensure that skills needs are being met? How can universities ensure that PGT students acquire the skills needed to successfully apply and transition to postgraduate research? In light of some applicants seeking to change career following a PGT qualification, how can these students be supported to gain the employability skills they need to succeed in their chosen sector?
Alex Bols, Deputy Chief Executive, Guild HE
Shan Ashton, Head of School, School of Lifelong Learning, Bangor University
Professor Helen Atkinson, Head of the Department of Engineering, University of Leicester; Chair, Perkins Task Group on Specialist Skills and former President, UK Engineering Professors' Council
Dr Louise Barriball, Head of Postgraduate Taught Studies, King's College London
Questions and comments from the floor with **Jason Leman**, Surveys Officer, Higher Education Academy
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**
Chris Evans MP, Member, All-Party Parliamentary University Group
Peter van Gelder, Director, Westminster Higher Education Forum