

**CoDH Briefing: *Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice***

**Summary**

The higher education Green Paper, [Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice](#) is a consultation on proposals that will significantly reshape the higher education (HE) landscape.

The broad stated aims of the proposals are to boost teaching standards, increase social mobility (the target is to increase the number of students from disadvantaged and black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds by 2020); increase choice (through greater competition by opening the sector to new providers), reduce bureaucracy; and create a simpler system with students at the centre.

The key proposals laid out in the Green Paper include:

- A new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (Part A, pages 18-41)
- A single route into higher education and a common system for all HE providers (Part B, pages 42-56)
- The creation of a new Office for Students (OfS) to promote the interests of students, taxpayers and employers (Part C, pages 57-68)
- Deregulatory measures through reforms to the constitutional arrangements to Higher Education Corporations (HEC) (pages 66-68)
- Reducing research funding bureaucracy (Part D, pages 69-73)

As widely reported, under the plans the Secretary of State would also be granted statutory duties and powers (page 64) which would include the power to increase tuition fees in line with inflation. Any large increases would still be subject to parliamentary approval. Significantly, universities would also no longer be duty bound to respond to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

**Department for  
Business Innovation &  
Skills (BIS): Green  
Paper (Eng)**

**Purpose:** This briefing provides an overview of proposals that will change the higher education and research landscape. A consultation on the proposals is open until 15 January 2016

**Publication Date:** 6  
November 2015

**Respond by:** the  
consultation closes on 15  
January 2016

**Relevance for CoDH  
members:** Since HE is a devolved matter, most of the proposals are only relevant to English HEIs, however, Part D, which focuses on changes to research funding that have UK-wide implications.

**CoDH contact for more  
information:**  
[Rachel Craine](#)

## **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)**

We can expect further details of the TEF in a technical consultation in 2016, but here are some of the details of what we know so far. Performance in the new TEF will largely be based around three measures of excellence: teaching quality, learning environment, and student outcomes and learning gain. Reputational and financial incentives will be used to encourage and reward teaching excellence. HEIs that perform well within the TEF will be allowed to increase fees in line with inflation.

The Green paper also proposes to use corresponding quality assessment (QA) metrics and indicators where possible in order to minimise burdens on HEIs, and greater use of the Grade Point Average (GPA) system to support employers in their recruitment processes. The need to find a coherent approach with HEFCE's ongoing review of QA is also significant here.

## **Office for Students (OfS)**

This new regulator signals a new architecture for HE and recognition of the Government's keenness to put in place a new 'single, transparent and light touch regulatory system'. This will be an arms-length body with a remit of championing the interests of students. Amongst other things the OfS will also have responsibility for running the TEF, allocating grant funding, quality assurance, and data. Important to note is that under these changes HFECE's regulatory functions will be absorbed into the OfS and the role and functions of the Director of Fair Access (DFA) and OFFA will also be taken over by this new body.

## **Reducing complexity and bureaucracy in research funding**

The Green paper is mindful not to pre-empt Sir Paul Nurse's review of the Research Councils, which is expected imminently. Reassurance is given that dual support system of funding which is 'established and respected' will continue in the UK. However, what is less clear is which body or bodies will be responsible for delivery of the funding. A number of possibilities are on the table with the final decision being guided by Nurse's review and the responses to the consultation, although it is widely anticipated that block research grant (QR) funding will be aligned with the Research Councils. This is a significant change that will be an area of focus for our response to the consultation.

## **Consultation Response**

Members can reply to the consultation [online](#). We plan to submit a response to the consultation, focused on particular areas of relevance for health education and research. Comments on the consultation should be sent to [Rachel Craine](#), Senior Policy Officer.

## **Further resources**

Chris Hale, Director of Policy, Universities UK (UUK) has published a [blog](#) highlighting some of the issues that UUK will be considering in more detail during the consultation phase.