



students

higher education

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Student

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Higher

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with employers

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Ambitions

good

provision

national

sector

Education

Review

Government

access

development

key

Institutions

HEFCE

forum

learning

NSF

graduate

student

information

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with

employers

economic

Education

sector

national

Contents

Foreword	04
Introduction	07
Summary of Key Strategic Developments	08
Chapter One – Teaching and Learning	10
Chapter Two – Employability	17
Chapter Three – Postgraduate Students	22
Chapter Four – Mature and Part-time Students	25
Chapter Five – Disabled Students	26
Chapter Six – Student Accommodation	28
Annex:	
• Update on Year 1 Recommendations	30
• List of Abbreviations and Organisations	34

We firmly believe that the continuing success of our higher education system is crucial for this country's wider economic, social and cultural prosperity. Higher education equips people with the skills that globalisation and a knowledge economy demand and with wider access available to more people than ever before, it is an integral factor in driving social mobility and in encouraging greater equality and diversity. Our commitment to higher education is demonstrated by the central role it plays in a number of recent wider government strategies.

Firstly, as highlighted in *Going for Growth: Our Future Prosperity*, the talent, skills and research that universities foster will be at the heart of the UK's effort to maintain its economic growth and recovery, by focusing on new and emerging high tech and low carbon industry. It is ultimately through the innovation and enterprise of our brightest graduates and researchers that we will build upon our position as a world leader in these fields. We are committed to recognising this through continued investment in higher education – and prioritisation of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Secondly, in *Unleashing Aspirations* (the Government response to the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions), the Government has promised to do more to ensure that people with ability, creativity and talent can succeed in the professions, regardless of their social or economic background. Today, over half of entrants to higher education are the first in their family to go to university – and this demonstrates our continuing success in widening participation. However, findings also show that these 'first generation' entrants are still less likely to attend the most competitive universities and are also less likely to be attracted to courses such as medicine, dentistry and veterinary science. This is something we are committed to improving.

Both widening participation in higher education and providing assistance for graduates to find valuable work experience and employment are crucial to ensuring social mobility. We have already established a number of successful initiatives which focus on these areas. These include: structured packages of assistance for 130,000 of the brightest young-people from low income backgrounds; a New Social Mobility Commission to provide expert advice on social mobility policy; £8 million of funding for 10,000 undergraduate internships; and the creation of a new national internship service to follow the success of the *Graduate Talent Pool* matching service.

These wider government strategies come at a time when we are also focusing on three major higher education initiatives – the Higher Ambitions Framework, the Postgraduate Review and the Independent Review of Funding and Student Finance. As such, it is more important than ever before that the student voice is heard and we value the role of the National Student Forum (NSF) in helping to ensure that this is possible. We hope that the partnership between students, the HE sector and government can be maintained and developed through the work of the Forum and we welcome their input on topics that are most important to the everyday experience of students. The benefits of involving students, at both a local and

national level, in reviewing how best to improve the provision of higher education are now widely recognised across the higher education sector. It is ultimately individual HE staff, working with students, who can identify where improvements can be made.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Lammy".

David Lammy MP
Minister for Higher Education

Finally, we thank the Forum Chair, Maeve Sherlock and all the members of the Forum for their continuing hard work and valuable contribution and we share their commitment to ensuring that each student has the best possible higher education experience.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Young".

Lord Tony Young
Minister for Students

Introduction

The National Student Forum Second Annual Report 2009 comes at a time of 3 major, government led strategic developments which will determine the way we support higher education in the future. These are:

- Government Framework: *Higher Ambitions – The future of universities in a knowledge Economy*
- Review of Postgraduate Taught and Research Provision
- Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance

(See next page for further details and web links)

With these initiatives, we are determined to provide a clear strategic framework within which the HE sector can develop over the next 10-15 years – to maintain our strategic advantage in higher education and to maximise its contribution to the economy and society. In each case, the NSF has made significant contributions to ensuring that student experience is paramount, particularly in the consideration of future strategy and in raising practical issues which have an impact on students' day to day lives.

While our response addresses each NSF recommendation on an individual basis, it is expected that the three strategies above will take forward measures to address many of the concerns and issues raised by the Forum in its latest report.

To show our continued commitment not only to this year's recommendations, but to the important issues highlighted in the 2008 NSF report, we have provided an update section for reference towards the end of this document (p.30-33).

Finally, we commend the Forum's excellent suggestions and recommended good practice outlined in the NSF report. We encourage staff at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to use them as a resource for change and enhancement. While the development of the HE sector is continuous and ongoing, the NSF Report and corresponding government response are designed to contribute to this process and we hope they can continue to do so productively in the future.

For individual HE staff or students interested in being involved in continuing debate around the issues raised by the Forum, we invite them to visit the NSF website:

www.nationalstudentforum.com

Summary of Key Strategic Developments

Going for Growth: Our Future Prosperity

Going for Growth confirms that the drive for sustainable economic growth will be at the heart of the Government's agenda going forward.

The paper presents a strategic cross-government approach to building a set of core capabilities in the British economy that will underpin growth. For each of these capabilities the paper sets out where we are, and where we want to go.

What are the core capabilities that will underpin growth?

1. Supporting enterprise and entrepreneurial activity.
2. Fostering knowledge creation and its application.
3. Helping people develop the skills and capabilities to reach their personal and economic potential.
4. Investing in the infrastructure required to support a modern economy.
5. Ensuring open and competitive markets allowing business to grow.
6. Building on our industrial strengths in sectors where we have expertise and investing to foster new comparative advantage.
7. Recognising and employing the right strategic role for government in markets enabling us to capitalise on new opportunities.

www.bis.gov.uk/growth/going-for-growth

Unleashing Aspirations: The Government Response to the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions

Promoting greater social mobility must be a fundamental ambition for our society. It means creating fair chances for all and removing the barriers some people face getting on in life. It means promoting a more equal society, which is based on merit regardless of background. Equality of opportunity is important for individuals – to ensure they have the greatest possibility to succeed and flourish in life; for society – as fairer, open and dynamic societies are happier, better educated, and more cohesive; and for the economy – because successful, dynamic economies need to draw on the talents and efforts of everyone, not just the few.

<http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/unleashingaspiration/>

Summary of Key Strategic Developments

Higher Ambitions – The Future of Universities in a knowledge Economy

Our Framework for higher education sets out proposals in six main areas, including how we will:

1. ensure that all those who have the ability to benefit can get access to higher education
2. support universities in making an even bigger contribution to economic recovery and future growth
3. strengthen the research capacity of our universities, and its translation into economic impact
4. promote excellent teaching for all students in higher education, with universities competing to attract students on the basis of the excellent service they provide
5. further strengthen the role of universities at the heart of our communities and shared intellectual life, and as one of the key ways in which we engage with the wider world
6. ensure that our universities continue to maintain excellence, even under tighter public financial constraints

www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-ambitions

The Postgraduate Review

The Review will cover both taught and 'by research' postgraduate provision. Its principal areas of investigation will be:

1. to assess the competitiveness of UK HEIs in the global market for postgraduate education
2. to assess the benefits of postgraduate study for all relevant stakeholders
3. to assess the evidence about the needs of business and other employers for postgraduates
4. to examine levels of participation, in terms of who undertakes postgraduate study, and whether there are barriers affecting the diversity of participation and any associated reduction in the availability of high-quality entrants

www.bis.gov.uk/postgraduate-review

Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance

- The Review is tasked with making recommendations to the Government on the future of fees policy and financial support for full and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- The Review will analyse the challenges and opportunities facing higher education and their implications for student financing and support. It will examine the balance of contributions to higher education funding by taxpayers, students, graduates and employers. In doing so it will consider a wide range of potential policy options
- The Review is expected to report by the autumn of 2010.

<http://hereview.independent.gov.uk/hereview/>

Chapter One – Teaching and Supporting Learning

The quality of higher education in this country is amongst the best in the world. The National Student Survey (NSS) has consistently shown that 80% and over of undergraduates rate the quality of their teaching and learning as 'good' or 'very good' and the UK remains the second most popular destination for overseas students.

Nevertheless, there are a number of ways in which teaching and learning could be further improved, helping to ensure greater consistency and the best possible learning experience for all students. These are considered, amongst other things, in *Higher Ambitions*.

As the National Student Forum identify, the level of responsibility which students have for their own learning increases dramatically on transition from school/further education to higher education. As such, students at university should not see themselves as passive consumers of higher education. Rather, students should be active partners, increasingly planning and managing their own learning and utilising the full range of learning opportunities available.

Recognising this, *Higher Ambitions* identifies that a key priority for the sector is to help empower students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning – by improving the information provided to students before and during their time in higher education. For example, it establishes the principle that all universities should publish a standard set of information setting out what students can expect in terms of the nature and quality of their programme.

The second key theme emphasised in *Higher Ambitions* is the need for increased flexibility in how and where students can access higher education. As the NSF highlight, effective use of digital technology and electronic communications will make an important contribution to providing flexibility and increased choice. The Government

provides resources and support to help HEIs maximise the potential of new technology through HEFCE and its newly updated strategy, *Enhancing Learning and Teaching through the use of Technology*.

Increased choice and flexibility must be underpinned by rigorous and responsive quality assurance processes, which are well maintained and communicated. This is the third priority area in *Higher Ambitions*, which supports a more proactive role for the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and a stronger external examiner system.

Our future vision is for more transparency, increased student involvement, more choice and flexibility but underpinned by clear and strong quality assurance. The National Student Forum's extensive work on teaching and learning provides a series of valuable inputs to help the HE sector implement the commitments in the *Higher Ambitions* framework.

On teaching and learning issues more widely, there is a comprehensive national infrastructure available to help HEIs and this has been established with strong government support over the last few years. We judge that this provides a firm base for further development and enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment. In this chapter, we set out how this infrastructure can help the sector respond to the useful, detailed recommendations made by the NSF in this area.

National Recommendations

1. Incentivise universities to achieve excellence in teaching & learning, as well as research

In launching Higher Ambitions Lord Mandelson said that the greatest driver for change in higher education over the next few years would be students and student demand.

Following the 2003 Higher Education White Paper, we introduced the National Student Survey (NSS) – to provide a direct method for students to feed back their views on key components of the quality of teaching and learning on their course. Each final year undergraduate is asked to complete the survey and thousands do so each year (2009 saw a response rate of 62%, with 223,363 students completing the survey). The results of the NSS can be accessed through the Unistats website, which provides official information to students to help them make an informed choice when deciding which university or college to apply to.

www.unistats.com

NSS results have consistently shown that, on the whole, students rate the overall quality of teaching and learning as 'good' or 'very good' with a national average of 80% or over.

The publication of NSS summary results (as part of Unistats website information) enables HEIs to identify areas for improvement on a course, faculty or institution-wide basis. It also allows prospective students, and those advising them to see and assess the views of previous students and compare courses in different institutions.

We believe that the NSS and Unistats are powerful tools for improvement, to help HEIs and students make more/better use of the information which they provide. HEFCE, with the HE sector, is reviewing the content of the NSS and the Unistats website and considering how the results can be better

communicated. This will feed in to the wider review of information needs announced in *Higher Ambitions*. HEFCE, UUK and Guild HE will consult with the sector in autumn 2010 on public information needs, focusing particularly on prospective students.

Another key area identified in *Higher Ambitions* is a strengthening of quality assurance arrangements, including the external examiner system. Central to this is a redevelopment of the role of the QAA. This will have three key aspects:

1. In future, the QAA will have a greater focus on the *student experience*. It is already increasing student engagement in its quality assurance and enhancement processes. For example, QAA has recruited students to be members of institutional audit teams from January 2010. The QAA Board includes student representatives and QAA directors have established a *sounding board* with the NUS.
2. The QAA will have a greater responsibility for the *public assurance* of quality and standards in higher education. It will have an enhanced role in ensuring that this work is communicated in a way which is accessible.
3. The QAA will be more proactive in investigating complaints about failures of standards and showing whether they are justified or not.

These new capabilities will be built in to the sector's development of *revised national quality assurance arrangements* (which will come into place after the 2010/11 academic year). A full sector consultation on the principles of the new arrangements has been launched by HEFCE, Universities UK, GuildHE and DELNI.

www.hefce.ac.uk/news/hefce/2009/qual.htm

National Recommendations

As highlighted earlier, over the last few years we have put in place a national framework of resources and support to help HEIs enhance the teaching and learning experience which they provide to their students.

HEFCE provides direct funding to institutions to encourage development of good practice, through the Teaching Enhancement and Student Success (TESS) allocation, and through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF).

Through the 74 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs), HEFCE have provided significant funding (£315 million from 2005/06 to 2009/10) to reward and recognise excellent teaching practice, and provide further investment in that practice to benefit students, teachers and institutions.

www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/funding/support/

HEFCE will be considering its approach to the enhancement of teaching and learning in the near future and will give the views of the NSF consideration in that process. As a result of the Forum's work and the increasing focus on ensuring the student voice is heard, HEFCE is funding a project between the NUS and the HE Academy to support institutions and students' unions to better engage students in shaping their learning experiences.

www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/engage/

The importance of professional standards and support for HE academic staff is recognised through the development of the HE Academy, which receives much of its funding from HEFCE.

To complement HEFCE funding of centres of excellence, the HE Academy offers status incentives for teaching excellence through national award schemes such as the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS).

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingindividuals/ntfs

The HE Academy, in partnership with the HE sector, developed the UK *Professional Standards for Teaching* – the Framework which has successfully provided a common base for new entrant training and qualifications.

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingindividuals/professionalrecognition

HE Academy now plans to focus more on supporting lecturers who have been in the profession for some time; it plans to provide greater support to the enhancement of *Continuing Professional Development Frameworks* in institutions.

Finally, we are encouraging the sector to continue to promote the importance of excellent teaching, through staff rewards and recognition. For example, we welcome the appointment of teaching professors. We hope such posts will help to establish a high professional status for teaching as well as research within the HE sector.

We have also asked HEFCE to work with the sector to ensure institutional strategies include information about appointment and promotion criteria in relation to pedagogy. In the new People Management Framework that HEFCE is developing, HEIs will be asked to identify outcomes such as 'improve the quality of teaching' and to measure the effectiveness of their people management processes such as promotion criteria, staff development and reward strategies.

National Recommendations

2. Encourage greater transferability (of credits) between institutions

As confirmed in *Higher Ambitions* (page 39), the Government would like to see increasing use of academic credit within and between institutions – in response to growing demand from students and employers.

We believe that the use of credits has a crucial role to play in enabling a wider range of students to access higher education. For example, credit helps students to gain recognition of prior learning and experience – and so helps those returning to formal learning after a significant absence and those progressing from further to higher education.

Once in higher education, credits enable students to study more flexibly by:

- allowing students to take planned breaks during their qualification and return at the same point
- helping part-time learners to study at a pace which suits them and fits with their outside commitments.

Credits can also potentially provide portability – the ability for students to move on to a different institution to study new modules with formal recognition of what they have already achieved.

In 2006 the Burgess Group began working on establishing a national credit framework for HE in England, with an ambition that by 2009/10 all main HE provision offered in HEIs should be credit-rated, and that credit values should be included in published descriptions of HE programmes.

In August 2008, the resulting new credit framework for English HE institutions was published, with associated guidance, to help participating institutions keep on track to credit-rate their provision by 2009/10.

A QAA survey in summer 2009 showed that very good progress has been made. The QAA survey looked at:

- the current use of credit in higher education in England
- the extent to which arrangements in institutions are aligned with the national guidance
- whether institutions will be making their credit values publicly available.

Out of the 108 HEIs that responded, 100 already have arrangements for using credit and out of those, 96 align with the credit framework.

www.qaa.ac.uk/england/credit/

Now that this credit framework is in place, we would encourage all HEIs in England to use it to credit-rate their provision, in a consistent way, so that students will see what credit they will obtain per module completed. As outlined above, this will encourage greater flexibility for the benefit of students.

Not only does credit help students move between institutions in this country, but also facilitates greater mobility across Europe for students, graduates and researchers. Credit transferability is a major strand of the Bologna process which supports compatibility and comparability of higher education qualifications throughout Europe. BIS is fully supporting Bologna implementation, liaising closely with the UK HE sector.

www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/Bologna/

National Recommendations

3. Increase flexibility and innovation in course structures and modes of delivery

This country's university system is rich and diverse, with different institutions serving different missions and playing to their individual strengths. This not only provides a dynamic and vibrant sector for the UK economy, but also helps ensure that suitably qualified students can find a course and institution to suit their current needs and their future aspirations.

Each university or college has to decide what it can provide in terms of its course structures and modes of delivery, and these decisions will reflect local circumstances and the profile of its student population. However, we believe that there are two compelling reasons why universities and colleges will need to increase the number of flexible and innovative learning opportunities which they provide:

- an increasing proportion of HE students are in employment while also studying at university, and therefore require a different approach to HE.
- as we outlined in *Higher Ambitions*, we believe that increasing the availability of flexible study is vital for creating fairer and wider access to higher education (e.g. for students with family responsibilities).

Our recent response to *Unleashing Aspirations* emphasised the importance of increasing the range of options available for people who wish to study on a modular basis, at a time and place that suits them.

<http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/unleashingaspiration/>

Higher Ambitions (page 37) also commits us to give priority to growing a diverse range of models of higher education most attractive to non-traditional students. These include options such as part-time and workplace-based courses aimed

particularly at mature students or those from non-traditional backgrounds. We will also encourage more Foundation degrees, HE level apprenticeships and increased opportunities to progress into higher education from Apprenticeships and technician level programmes.

We will build upon existing work to promote flexibility in course structures. For example, many institutions have considerable experience in providing distance learning options, often incorporating new learning technologies.

Nevertheless, there are more innovative forms of flexible provision which some institutions offer and which others could consider. HEFCE is funding pilots at eight institutions focusing on variation in pace and intensity of study, and flexible methods of delivery. These include two-year honours degrees, extended degrees, flexibly delivered Foundation degrees and work-based learning.

An interim evaluation of these pilots was published in late 2009 and a final evaluation will be completed in 2010/11. We would encourage HEIs to use the evaluation as a practical resource to help them develop more flexible provision.

www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/flexible/

The interim evaluation found an increasing appetite for flexible learning amongst students, as well as support from employers and professional bodies. A number of institutions have been able to demonstrate 'sustainable flexibility' through innovations such as 'whole-year' teaching and by enhancing their student support. We hope that these findings will be a valuable resource for HEIs in providing practical advice on flexible provision.

In the light of the findings of these two evaluations, HEFCE will work with the Government to consider the best ways of encouraging and enabling institutions to increase flexibility in their course structures.

National Recommendations

Part-time study is a key strand of flexible provision, and Universities UK is keen to identify factors affecting the supply of part-time opportunities. They have commissioned an update to previous work: *Policy briefing: Part-time students in higher education – supporting higher level skills and lifelong learning*, published 2006:

www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Publication-246.aspx

The new study, to be published in early 2010, will:

- map the geography of HE *part-time* undergraduate provision highlighting any 'cold spots'
- describe the nature of HE *part-time* provision and the part-time student population
- identify the external and internal factors both facilitating and inhibiting the growth of HEI *part-time* provision
- identify what changes are required by HEIs, Government and the funding councils to encourage greater *part-time* undergraduate provision.

The study will concentrate on factors impacting on the *supply* of part-time provision but will also examine some issues affecting the *demand* for part-time provision, specifically student financial support.

4. Develop a national strategy to increase students' access to academic texts through electronic means

There are a number of complementary national initiatives in place to improve access to online learning resources provided by HEFCE and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). JISC is funded by the UK higher and further education funding bodies to provide world-class leadership in the innovative use of ICT to support education and research.

Increasing the digital availability of resources that students need – including academic texts – is already an essential requirement of HEFCE's revised e-learning strategy: *Enhancing learning and teaching through the use of technology*.

www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_12/09_12.pdf

HEFCE is also funding the Open Educational Resources Programme, which is investigating ways to make a wide range of higher education resources freely available, easily discoverable online and routinely re-useable by both educators and learners worldwide.

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/oer

HEFCE has recently established the Online Learning Task Force, which aims to maintain and develop the position of UK higher education as a world leader in online learning. The Task Force will report by autumn 2010 and will consider:

- what needs to be done to stimulate the identification and growth of good practice and innovation in online learning
- ways in which teaching staff can best adapt and expand their capabilities in order to support a new generation of online and blended-provision learners
- how UK HE can take advantage of new and expanding international markets

National Recommendations

- ways to enhance collaboration between HEIs and other organizations, both public and private, and encourage co-operation between UK funding bodies, universities and colleges to support this strategy.

JISC is responsible for two key initiatives to help improve the supply of online content and assist HE institutions with their procurement.

1. JISC *Collections* helps by procuring digital content and negotiating affordable agreements with digital content publishers on behalf of the UK higher and further education sectors (under licensing terms that maximise adoption and use). JISC Collections has negotiated agreements for a wide range of digital content including electronic journals, maps, newspapers, images, film, e-books and databases.

www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/services/jisccollections.aspx.

2. JISC also leads the Strategic Content Alliance to enable key public sector providers of online digital content to collaborate and coordinate their activities to maximise the funds available and fully realise the potential of their content to benefit education and the UK generally.

www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/themes/content/contentalliance.aspx

Looking to the future a number of JISC-funded projects are making use of *cloud technologies* to open up new opportunities for universities and colleges. These will investigate how the cloud can best be used for better learning, teaching and research in higher education.

Cloud technology is 'computing capability that is delivered as a service over the internet' and removes the need for users to be associated with a single fixed personal computer. With cloud technology, access to information can happen anywhere, at any time across a shared platform. Such technology has potential implications for the enhancement of future higher education provision and, in terms of technology infrastructure, has a reduced cost both financially and environmentally.

Chapter Two – Improving Employability

The Government's recently launched growth strategy: *Going for Growth: Our Future Prosperity* shows how we will support and unleash the entrepreneurial, innovative and dynamic talents we have in this country. This will boost the economy through sustainable growth of new and emerging low carbon industry. Higher education is, and will continue to be, essential to the UK's growth and economic performance in this respect and this is reflected in two of the growth strategy's key implementation areas:

- Fostering knowledge creation and its innovative application
- Helping people develop the skills and capabilities to reach their personal and economic potential

Our own higher education strategy *Higher Ambitions* also addresses the importance of higher education for the country's growth and focuses on supporting universities to make an even bigger contribution to economic recovery, future growth and employment. Its focus on employability outlines measures to improve the relevance of higher education to employers' needs; to prioritise HEFCE funding on key sectors and skills; and to ensure that students understand how a course will enhance their future employability.

While employability is important in itself as an outcome of higher education, it is also essential to ensure that the potential skills and talents of UK graduates are utilised meaningfully for the benefit of society. In order to ensure that the economy is supplied with the appropriate skills, there will be a new central role for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). They will advise on areas where there is insufficient supply of graduates in particular disciplines, and also cases where university programmes are failing to reflect changed business requirements, or the priorities articulated by employer-led bodies such as Sector Skills Councils and Regional Development Agencies.

Evidence generally shows that employers do value graduates and the skills and knowledge they are gaining at university. At present, most employers (84%) think that their recent graduate recruits were well prepared for work (National Employer Skills Survey 2007). However, while the CBI's Education and Skills survey 2009 also showed that over 80% of employers responding were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the employability skills of graduates, there is still a perception that HEIs could do more. For example, in the same CBI 2009 survey 82% of employers said that universities needed to do more to equip their graduates with employability skills.

We agree with the NSF that students have a responsibility for managing their *own* employment prospects, and should take the initiative by actively seeking to gain skills, advice and opportunities from an early stage in their time in higher education. However, we also recognise the important role played by university careers services and work placement providers in facilitating the steps from higher education into the work place. Employers report that those graduates who have had worthwhile work experience – through internships, placements, sandwich years or part-time

employment – have generally acquired a higher level of employability, and are able to apply themselves more quickly when they reach the workplace.

Many courses offered by universities are geared towards providing the skills and knowledge needed for specific career paths such as law and medicine. Furthermore, *Higher Ambitions* emphasises the

importance of the sector providing more courses in the new industries and new occupations needed to support economic growth. However, there is also a need to ensure that *all* students, regardless of course or subject taken, have both awareness of and access to opportunities that can provide the skills and experience that employers are looking for.

National Recommendations

We welcome the NSF's recommendations on how to improve student employability. While students entering higher education have different motivations and are at different stages of their lives, it is right that each student should understand how their course will provide opportunities to develop skills and knowledge, and how this will help them in their future careers.

That is why we are asking all universities to produce a statement on how they promote student employability, setting out:

- what they are doing to prepare their students for the labour market including: equipping them with workplace skills such as team working, business awareness and communication.
- how they plan to make information about the employment outcomes of their provision available to prospective students.

These statements should be in place in time for applicants for the 2011/12 academic year to refer to them. HEFCE will be working on this with national key partners including the UKCES, CBI and key national HE sector bodies.

We are placing a priority on the development and publication of this strategic statement by each university, because – as the NSF identify – this will provide a framework for the improvement of student support, such as work placements and university careers services.

National Recommendations

5. Incentivise placement providers to increase the number of, and improve the quality of, placements on offer

HE Institutions already use a range of approaches to help students acquire employability skills, and work placements are one of the most common methods. *Higher Ambitions* recognised that many universities already build work placements into their courses (and this is funded through current HEFCE teaching costs).

In particular, we recognise that internships represent a valuable opportunity for both undergraduates and new graduates to experience the workplace and build their skills, and we are keen to promote them as an option for both groups. In a challenging economic climate, the Government is providing practical support to stimulate the number of opportunities available.

In the Government response to *Unleashing Aspirations* we announced that we will offer financial support for up to 10,000 undergraduates from low-income backgrounds to take up short internships in industry, business and the professions. £8 million of government funding will be provided to pay a bursary equivalent to minimum wage towards this scheme and we will be seeking matched funding from the professions and employers. The details of the scheme will be developed with the higher education sector and through the Gateways to the Professions Collaborative Forum. We expect that these vacancies will be advertised, along with other undergraduate internships and graduate internships, through a refined on-line service (national internship service).

<http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/unleashingaspiration/>

For new graduates, the Office for Graduate Opportunities (created within BIS in April 2009) has been working over recent months to boost the number of internship opportunities. With this in mind, we developed the Graduate Talent Pool – a one-stop graduate internship vacancy website for employers and graduates. Over 13,000 vacancies have so far been made available through this route, including some of those supported by HEFCE's £60million Economic Challenges Investment Fund (ECIF).

<http://graduatetalentpool.direct.gov.uk>

In addition, new graduates can access internships through their universities: some of the ECIF funded placements are advertised through this route, as are many of the 10,000 subsidised internships announced by the Prime Minister last year. These will be focussed on Low Carbon and New Industries, New Jobs businesses and as many as 5,000 will be with small businesses.

We believe that these specific responses by the Government and HEFCE to immediate economic challenges are likely to have helped stimulate the market for quality placements.

However, it remains important that more employers work with universities to offer an increased range of work experience and placement opportunities. Providing work placements can include benefits to the *employer* as much as the employee. They provide the opportunity to bring new skills, enthusiasm and fresh perspectives into a business as well as a good opportunity to assess an individual's suitability for permanent employment in the future.

We are very pleased to see the leadership shown by employers involved in the CBI's Higher Education Taskforce, who have committed themselves to offer more internships and work placements (see their report, *Stronger Together*).

http://highereducation.cbi.org.uk/uploaded/CBI_HE_taskforce_report.pdf

National Recommendations

We believe that through the efforts of CBI employers, and further dissemination of good practice through national partners such as Universities UK, we can increase the number of quality opportunities for students.

The CBI / UUK publication *Future Fit – preparing graduates for the world of work*, illustrates a number of successful and diverse approaches by universities and by large and small businesses offering placements. It recommends that employers consider offering a *range* of work experience opportunities, from year-long work placements to a few weeks work experience.

www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Futurefit.aspx

It is also important that universities reach out to their local community in order to benefit from relationships with local businesses and employers. In this way, universities can boost the local economy and can facilitate the transfer of knowledge into the local area. While many universities already make good use of local partnerships, we believe there is potential for more collaboration. Students can benefit from a pool of local employment opportunities before *and after* graduation. At the same time, employers can benefit from an accessible stream of highly skilled and talented individuals, keen to develop in the workplace.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) are a valuable and well established tool for local businesses to exploit their relationships with universities and also provide valuable work experience and career opportunities for graduates and postgraduates.

The BIS funded Technology Strategy Board is currently working with partners to double the number and increase the flexibility of KTPs.

www.ktponline.org.uk/

6. Identify ways in which university careers services can be better supported to meet the specific needs of particular student groups (e.g. disabled students, international students and postgraduate students)

Higher Ambitions set out the Government's commitment to ensuring that students are better informed about what their higher education choices will involve, and this includes subsequent careers progression. Improved information and more informed decisions prior to entering higher education will benefit all students.

We welcome efforts by university careers services and their partners to better meet the specific needs of the diverse student body. (See *NSF 2009 Report Chapter 2 for examples of good practice*). The HE sector receives excellent support from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). Their 2006-2010 strategy uses an evidence based approach to identify areas of work which would support the sector in their efforts to ensure that all higher education students have an inclusive experience whilst studying, or working, in higher education:

www.ecu.ac.uk/our-projects/work-placements-and-transition-to-work

There are key national initiatives in place to help the groups named by the NSF which the Government supports (makes direct or indirect financial contributions towards them). The lead organisations involved would welcome the opportunity to discuss these initiatives with the Forum.

On postgraduate students, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) is working towards a 'postgraduate community' for careers professionals interested in discussing and sharing ideas, resources (e.g. the AGCAS 'postgraduate toolkit') and good practice.

www.agcas.org.uk/communities/16-Postgraduate-

National Recommendations

The ECU has identified that disabled students are among a number of student groups that may be disadvantaged – resulting in unequal access to and experience of work placements compared to other students. As a first stage, ECU is investigating the experiences of students from these groups, undertaking arts and cultural courses and related work placements, and will be developing guidance for higher education careers and related placement advisers in summer 2010.

The Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education, ('PMI 2'), is a five year strategy to secure the UK's position as a leader in international education and sustain the managed growth of UK international education. A number of international student 'employability' projects have been, and continue to be, funded through PMI2 and will be delivered by AGCAS, the National Association of Student Employment Services (NASES) and a variety of project partners.

http://nases.org.uk/files/PMI2_Project_Overview__2009_2011.pdf

AGCAS, with PMI 2 support, has in recent years worked hard to identify the areas of greatest need in providing careers and employment support to international students and graduates, and to provide a range of resources to help better equip careers and employment practitioners to carry out this important aspect of their work.

This has included information and training on:

- enhancing employability
- the labour market in the UK & abroad
- different job-hunting strategies
- the provision of contacts to facilitate recruitment and entry to the labour market for temporary, part-time and graduate jobs.

Chapter Three – Improving the Postgraduate Student Experience

In a high skills economy, where knowledge is essential, we will increasingly need people with good postgraduate qualifications to work in both the public and private sectors. It is therefore important that we maintain the high international reputation of our postgraduate education and ensure that we continue to attract high calibre students from this country and overseas.

Recognising the strategic importance of postgraduate study in July 2009, Lord Mandelson asked Professor Adrian Smith to lead a full Postgraduate Review, looking at both taught and research postgraduate provision:

www.bis.gov.uk/postgraduate-review

The Review Team have invited a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to the Review, and have met with an NSF Vice-Chair to discuss the Forum's recommendations.

The NSF has focused this year on three main issues affecting the experience of postgraduate students. These include:

- 1) An infrastructure (including IAG, funding structures and support services) predominantly and traditionally suited to the needs of undergraduates rather than postgraduates;
- 2) Perceived patchiness of academic support for postgraduates – both between universities and between departments in the same university;
- 3) Academic and social isolation, due to the lack of sufficiently developed support networks.

The postgraduate student experience will be central to the Review and the NSF input is therefore both helpful and timely. The Review Team will also consider the availability of information for those considering postgraduate study and how to ensure that everyone who chooses to undertake postgraduate study has access to the right information, advice, support and opportunities to get the best value from the experience. These are key themes highlighted in both the first and second annual reports from the National Student Forum. We would encourage HEIs to use both NSF reports to re-examine the support which they are providing for postgraduates.

The output of the Postgraduate Review will be published in spring 2010 and will also feed into the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance due to report by autumn 2010.

National Recommendations

We welcome the NSF's recommendations on how to improve the postgraduate experience. These will feed into the Postgraduate Review, which will report its findings in spring 2010.

In advance of the outcome of the Review, we can highlight some existing good practice which responds to the specific recommendations made by the Forum.

7. Increase opportunities for cross-institutional networking and ideas exchange for postgraduate students

In accordance with the focus in *Higher Ambitions* on equipping Britain's workforce for a global economy, we will promote knowledge exchange activities and work with HEFCE to assess the UK's performance and effectiveness internationally. We will also work with Regional Development Agencies to find more explicit ways for them to help universities develop their regional and sub-regional exchange role, focusing particularly on those markets and sectors with the potential for growth.

There are already a wide range of resources and networks (see below) to help postgraduate students and their colleagues to network effectively, including those provided by Research Councils UK and Vitae. We encourage HEIs to publicise these more widely.

Some examples of these are:

Transferable skills training and career development opportunities, which most HEIs have now embedded as part of the postgraduate researcher experience. This includes opportunities to network with businesses and across disciplines and institutions, for example through the Northern Enterprise Schools Consortium:

www.liv.ac.uk/gradschool/events/cs/enterprise.htm#enterpriseschools

Online networks for postgraduate students include the Graduate Junction Academic Network:

www.graduatejunction.com/site/index

Vitae works with UK HEIs to embed professional and career development in the research environment. There are blogs and discussion threads for postgraduate researchers on their website:

www.vitae.ac.uk

Resources for cross-institutional networking and ideas exchange for postgraduate students include:

National GRADschools

www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1402/Vitae-programmes.html#_GRADschools

Vitae Regional Hubs

www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/1218/Postgraduate-researchers.html

Many professional bodies also offer networking and opportunities for ideas exchange. For example, the Royal Society of Chemistry:

www.rsc.org/Membership/Networking/index.asp

National Recommendations

8. Improve access to independent, impartial advice about the benefits of postgraduate study and the practicalities of study

The Postgraduate Review will look at whether postgraduates have access to the right information, advice and guidance, before, during and after postgraduate study.

Vitae has already made a significant contribution to improving the information available on the career pathways of postgraduate researchers, through its publications *“What Do PhDs Do?”* and *“What Do Researchers Do?”* These include case studies from doctoral graduates, which illustrate the diversity of doctoral career pathways.

www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice

Research Councils UK (RCUK) is currently conducting a doctoral career pathways study which will provide further evidence on the outcomes of postgraduate researchers and the contribution that they make to the labour market:

www.rcuk.ac.uk/rescareer/rcdu/impact.htm

9. Improve awareness about the full costs of postgraduate study and sources of finance

Postgraduates seeking financial support can currently find sources of financial information via DirectGov (which has an updated section on graduate careers and postgraduate study) and in the financial guides supplied by the Student Loans Company. The Postgraduate Studentships website provides guidance on possible funding sources, as does the funding section of the Prospects website.

www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk

www.prospects.ac.uk

Professional and Career Development Loans (PCDLs) form part of the UK Government’s plans to tackle the economic downturn, offering greater scope for individuals with limited resources to retrain or up-skill to improve their employability and progress in their careers.

PCDLs are flexible and can be used to support course fees, other course costs (including books, childcare and travel) and even living expenses. They can also be used to top up other forms of support for learning, e.g. bursaries, grants etc. They are therefore an option for postgraduates seeking sources of finance. Information about PCDLs can be found at:

www.direct.gov.uk/pcdl

The Postgraduate Review will also take account of this recommendation and consider whether the current sources of financial advice are sufficiently clear and easy to access.

During the last decade, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of mature and part-time students in higher education (32% of undergraduate students are now part-time and 29% are mature – *Higher Education Statistics Agency figures*). These students bring an increasingly varied set of needs and expectations and this has led to a change in the average student population.

As we highlighted in *Higher Ambitions*, we see this trend continuing. A successful high skills economy will see more employees increasingly using higher education to develop or update their skills and knowledge. In addition to economic benefits, this will allow more and more individuals to fulfil their potential and help foster a more inclusive society.

In some HEIs, the average student is no longer an 18-21 year old taking a 3 year, full-time degree. These institutions are already benefiting from the value of a more diverse student community and have adapted what and how they provide accordingly. However, in future all universities and colleges will need to tailor their teaching and learning and their support services to the needs of mature and part-time students.

National Recommendations

We welcome the NSF's recommendations on improving the experience of mature and part-time students and we feel it is important for their voice to be heard through organisations such as the NSF.

Indeed, *Higher Ambitions* states that future expansion will hinge on developing new forms of higher education provision, which will specifically suit mature and part-time students. We would like to see more programmes taken part-time, in manageable modules that a learner can access alongside other commitments in a busy life. The underlying theme is the need to respond to the growing diversity of learner demand, without artificial constraints imposed by funding rules or the customs and practices of universities.

10. Review Student Finance Policy to provide comparative funding for part-time students and the universities that teach them.

The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance was announced on 9th November 2009.

The terms of reference of the Review direct it to consider the scope for a greater diversity of models of learning, such as modular and *part-time* study and the availability of student support for such courses. It will report by autumn 2010. The NSF is represented on the Review Panel's Advisory Forum – to help ensure that the needs and views of a wide range of students are fully considered in the Review.

11. Review ELQ policy, especially for courses that address specific skills shortages.

We still believe we were right to phase out funding for the majority of students studying for a qualification equivalent to, or lower than a qualification which they already hold (e.g. a graduate taking another undergraduate course). Given limited resources, we believe it is right to focus support on people who have not previously benefited from higher education. We think that is both fairer and the best way to use public funds to meet the country's long term high level skills needs. However, we are committed to keeping this policy under review.

Chapter Five – Improving the Experience of Disabled Students

Universities have a responsibility to be inclusive of all students and to foster equality and diversity. As such, improving the experience of disabled students has been a high priority for the NSF and was covered as a sub-topic in their 2008 report. Since then, the Government and partner organisations have taken a number of steps towards exploring the issues faced by disabled students and have developed several initiatives to deal with their findings. (These are outlined in the 2009 NSF report).

Nevertheless, as the NSF point out, there are still a number of areas to be addressed if the experience of disabled students is to meet expectations and we welcome their further recommendations.

National Recommendations

NB See also, Recommendations 4 and 6 above in Teaching and Learning and Employability

12. Improve disability awareness training and awareness-raising within universities and colleges

Awareness training can help HE staff to ensure that their disabled students have equality of opportunity. We would encourage all institutions to have appropriate policies to identify where staff training is needed.

The Government will continue to support and fund key sector organisations in this area. We welcome the ECU's work with HEIs to help improve their support to disabled students.

A new ECU project will look at how HEIs collect and use data on their disabled student population, how they encourage disability disclosure, and how they can better support the experience of disabled students. This will include an exploration of disability awareness training.

ECU guidance, based on initiatives identified through this work, will be available in late 2010. The HE Academy also works to promote disability equality and supports the development of an inclusive culture within HEIs to enhance disabled students' learning experiences. A principal focus of their work is supporting institutions on the design and implementation of learning, teaching and assessment practices (which uphold disabled students' entitlement to participate in all aspects of their study programmes and achieve success).

To this end, the HE Academy is delivering a range of activities to support institutional change and development, as well as disseminating relevant research evidence across institutions. See below for details:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/inclusion/disability

Through its TechDIs service, JISC provides advice and guidance to HE staff – to enable them to make best use of technology in supporting their disabled students.

Chapter Six – Student Accommodation

We recognise that the quality of a student's accommodation can have a major impact on their experience of higher education. We also understand that accommodation issues are often affected by factors outside the higher education system, including private landlords, local authorities and property market fluctuations.

However, whilst the market is varied – from university owned accommodation to private landlords – we agree that there should be robust measures in place to help ensure that student accommodation meets reasonable standards.

National Recommendations

As the NSF point out, there are a number of existing initiatives designed to improve the situation for students, involving both government and national organisations (including UUK and NUS) working alongside universities and students. These include:

- working to join up existing accommodation codes of practice
- promoting social integration into the local community
- providing dedicated help on student accommodation at universities and colleges, including additional support for students with specific needs

The Housing Act 2004 helps to raise the management standards and physical conditions of private rented accommodation and requires Codes of Practice for good management of university owned and managed accommodation.

The accommodation Codes of Practice also help increase awareness amongst students of the standards they should expect when looking for accommodation.

www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/PolicyAndResearch/Guidance/AccommodationCodeofPractice

Universities often provide a significant amount of information about housing and will work with a range of stakeholders from student unions, local authorities, local communities and private landlords/agencies to help provide a good service to students. These relationships are important in supporting students when living in local communities. Equally important is the support provided by the good practice guidelines available from Universities UK and the NUS:

www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Publication-232.aspx

www.nus.org.uk/PageFiles/350/09-04-22_Neighbourhood-Partnerships-and-Planning.pdf

In early 2010, NUS will be publishing a report it has co-written with UUK called '*Living Together, Working together*' – a collection of best practice from universities and student unions about their joint initiatives in the community. We hope this will be a valuable addition to assisting student unions and students themselves to engage with local partners and stakeholders.

National Recommendations

There are also national resources to help HEIs provide tailored accommodation support to students with specific needs. NUS was involved in the writing of the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) guidance for accommodation providers:

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/student-accommodation-providers-handbook

Other ECU links which may be helpful include:

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/inclusive-campus

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/sensory-access-in-higher-education-guidance-report-2009

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/managing-inclusive-building-design-for-higher-education

Annex – Update on Year 1 Recommendations

We have provided a progress update on some of the key areas highlighted in the 2008 National Student Forum report and the corresponding Government Response.

(NB several issues raised in the 2008 report – especially on disabled, international and postgraduate student issues – were further refined by the NSF in 2009 and so are covered in the main body of this document.)

Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Investigate how national websites help applicants make their decisions and how they complement HEI websites; explore the feasibility of a 'first port of call IAG portal'

Higher Ambitions announced two HEFCE-led comprehensive reviews and public consultations:

- On the information needs of applicants and students;
- On how Unistats content and access can be improved.

HEFCE have commissioned external research on public information needs, focusing particularly on prospective students, which will lead to a final sector consultation with UUK and Guild HE in Autumn 2010.

Following the 2009 Government Response, UCAS carried out a full investigation into the adequacy of existing web-based information – and the feasibility and desirability of introducing a single access portal.

After considering the UCAS evidence (and in view of the much wider HEFCE forthcoming research) the Department and HEFCE agreed that the most effective way to help applicants was to improve the two national sources of web-based information which were most used by potential students: UCAS and DirectGov.

Both websites have improved, and we are continuing to review their navigability and their links to other relevant information sources. For example, DirectGov includes clear signposted sections on what to consider before applying and how to apply.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/UniversityAndHigherEducation/index.htm

The UCAS Course Search facility now includes a direct link to Unistats information – showing employment outcomes and student satisfaction on first year drop-out rates for each course.

www.ucas.com/students/coursesearch/coursesearch2010

We will continue to work with UCAS and DirectGov to identify further improvements for students applying during 2010/11.

Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)

<p>Professionalise and raise the profile of school and college careers advisors</p>	<p>In October 2009 the Department for Children, Schools and Families published a major new strategy: <i>Quality, Choice and Aspiration: a strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance</i>.</p> <p>Developing the capacity of the school/college workforce is a key theme of the strategy and implementation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDA good practice guidance for subject teachers and specialists; • Publication of research on the training needs of careers co-ordinators and exploration of new qualifications to meet those needs; • Work with the National College, TDA and LSIS to help head teachers and college principals to provide their staff with the help and support that they need. <p>Alongside the IAG Strategy, DCSF published Statutory Guidance to Schools on Impartial Careers Education. The accompanying Resources Pack will help the school workforce to deliver more effective support to pupils.</p> <p>A joint CWDC/LLUK review of the skills requirements of careers specialists working with young people and adults has been commissioned. This will report in spring 2010 and is expected to lead to the development of a new qualifications and training framework for careers advisers.</p>
<p>Increase the use of student ambassador schemes</p>	<p>The Aimhigher Associates Scheme is already being rolled out nationwide and we are on track to meet or exceed our expectation of 5,500 undergraduate mentors helping 21,000 students.</p> <p>The University of Cardiff has been appointed as the National Co-ordinator this year (2009) to support Aimhigher Partnerships in this area and identify and disseminate best practice.</p>
<p>Define and introduce best practice guidelines for pre-entry information provided by universities and colleges</p>	<p>The UCAS Course search facility now includes Entry Profiles which provide, in a common format, full details of entry requirements for each course – not only all prior qualifications accepted but also the kind of personal qualities, interests and experiences which will help students succeed on their chosen course. Over 90% of courses now have an Entry Profile and this will rise close to 100% with further development and updating.</p> <p>(see also main teaching and learning section for details of a specific commitment in <i>Higher Ambitions</i> on this area)</p>

Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)

Introduce an entitlement for all Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) students to visit at least two universities or colleges

In the *New Opportunities White Paper* published 2009 the Government announced a guarantee that high performing pupils from low income backgrounds will have a structured package of assistance to help them progress to higher education. The guarantee includes the promise that every such pupil should have an early experience of what higher education is like, and later a more sustained experience. As we said in *Higher Ambitions*, we will publish a high level delivery plan for this guarantee in early 2010.

Student Finance

Increase Student loans to reflect increasing cost of living

The 2007/08 Student Income and Expenditure Survey (SIES) was published in March 2009. Information from the survey will be used to inform the *Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance*. The Review, which was launched in November 2009, is tasked with making recommendations to the Government on the future of fees policy and financial support for full and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students. The Review is expected to report in the autumn of 2010.

Raise awareness of student financial advisory services

AMOSSHE's executive members were instrumental in developing Money Doctors in 2007, and in subsequently promoting this across the HE sector. Information about Money Doctors is available at www.fsa.gov.uk/financial_capability/our-work/higher_education/md_toolkit.shtml

Disabled Students Sub-group

Develop a bank of student ambassadors for disability

ECU and the HE Academy are in the closing stages of a project to further the involvement of Disabled Students in HEI policy and practice. Seven HEIs have been involved in developing a range of initiatives to involve disabled students.

International Students Sub-group

<p>Identify mechanisms to reassure applicants about course and institution authenticity</p>	<p>The Register of Sponsors was implemented at the end of March 2009 (managed and run by the UK Borders Agency) and means that only institutions that are licensed by UKBA are able to sponsor international students to come to the UK to study. The introduction of the Register has significantly reduced the number of institutions able to recruit international students and there are now only about 2000 licensed bodies on the Register.</p> <p>The Register will therefore provide reassurance to international students on the authenticity of the organisations and the fact that the sponsors will need to be externally approved or inspected will mean that their provision will be subject to formal quality assurance.</p>
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Postgraduate Student Sub-group

<p>Explore the potential for international postgraduate students to secure Research Council funding</p>	<p>As part of the Postgraduate Review, being led by Professor Adrian Smith, we will consider how to ensure that the UK remains an attractive place for international students to undertake postgraduate study; and whether there is the right level of financial support available for international postgraduates. The Postgraduate Review is due to report in Spring 2010.</p>
<p>Create an accessible database for alternative sources of funding</p>	<p>Postgraduates seeking financial support can currently find sources of financial information via DirectGov and in the financial guides supplied by the Student Loans Company. The Postgraduate Studentships website provides guidance on possible funding sources, as does the funding section of the Prospects website:</p> <p>www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk</p> <p>www.prospects.ac.uk</p> <p>The Postgraduate Review will take account of this recommendation and consider whether the current sources of advice are sufficiently clear and easy to access.</p>
<p>Develop a postgraduate student calculator to provide a clearer indication of overall costs</p>	<p>Improvements for post graduate students were considered by SLC but due to a demanding delivery programme developments for undergraduates took priority. This is something which could be revisited, budgets allowing, in the future.</p>

Annex – List of Abbreviations and Organisations

AGCAS	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services	
Aimhigher		www.aimhigher.ac.uk
AMOSSHE	Association of Managers of Student Support Services in Higher Education	www.amosshe.org.uk
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	www.bis.gov.uk
CBI	Confederation of British Industry	www.cbi.org.uk
CETLs	Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning	www.hefce.ac.uk/Learning/TInits/cetl/
CWDC	Children’s Workforce Development Council	www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families	www.dcsf.gov.uk/
DELNI	Department for Employment and Learning of Northern Ireland	
DIUS	Department for Innovation Universities and Skills (now BIS)	
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit	www.ecu.ac.uk
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance	http://ema.direct.gov.uk
FSA	Financial Services Authority	www.fsa.gov.uk
HEA	Higher Education Academy	www.heacademy.ac.uk/
HECSU	Higher Education Careers Survey Unit	www.hecsu.ac.uk/
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council For England	www.hefce.ac.uk/
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions	
IAG	Information Advice and Guidance	
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee	www.jisc.ac.uk
LLUK	Lifelong Learning UK	www.lluk.org/
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service	www.lsis.org.uk/LSISHome.aspx
NASES	National Association of Student Employment Services	www.nases.org.uk/
NCWE	National Council for Work Experience	www.work-experience.org/ http://ncwe.rd/index.jsp
NESS	National Employment Skills Survey	
NSF	National Student Forum	www.nationalstudentforum.com
NSS	National Student Survey	www.thestudentsurvey.com
NTFS	National Teaching Fellowship Scheme	www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/supportingindividuals/ntfs
NUS	National Union of Students	www.nus.org.uk/
OGO	Office for Graduate Opportunities	
PMI	Prime Minister’s Initiative	www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi2.htm
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency	www.qaa.ac.uk/
RCUK	Research Councils UK	www.rcuk.ac.uk

SIES	Student Income and Expenditures Survey	
Skill	National Bureau for Students with Disabilities	www.skill.org.uk/
SLC	Student Loans Company	www.slc.co.uk/
SPA	Supporting Professionalism in Admissions	www.spa.ac.uk/
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths	www.dcsf.gov.uk/stem/
TDA	Training and Development Agency	www.tda.gov.uk/
TESS	Teaching Enhancement and Student Success	
TQEF	Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund	www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/enhance/tqef.asp
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service	www.ucas.ac.uk/
UK PSF	UK Professional Standards Framework	
UKBA	UK Border Agency	www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/
UKCES	UK Commission for Employment and Skills	www.ukces.org.uk/
UKCISA	UK Council for International Student Affairs	www.ukcisa.org.uk/
Unistats	University Statistics website	www.unistats.com/
UUK	Universities UK	www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/
Vitae		www.vitae.ac.uk/

