



Department for  
**Employment  
and Learning**  
[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)



# Consultation on part-time and postgraduate student finance

## Shared future proofing

**1. Does the proposed policy promote individuals from different religious, political, racial or other Section 75(1) backgrounds sharing or engaging together?**

**Positive/  
Negative/ None**

**Positive**

**Qualitative  
Evidence**

The policies considered within the consultation are designed to ensure that access to higher education is based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay, irrespective of background or personal circumstance.

The policies under consideration in particular seek to address access issues to part-time and postgraduate study, on which several section 75 groups – older people, people of a marital status other than single, and people with dependents – are demonstrably more reliant (see quantitative evidence).

By aiding access for these groups, the policies considered in the consultation should encourage sharing and engaging between them and with other section 75 groups.

Additionally, all higher education providers in Northern Ireland are required to have an Equality Scheme under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act, and the Equality Commission is responsible for ensuring this. Apart from some outreach centres which, by definition, are in local communities, there is no segregation in the universities and colleges.

Equality Schemes at higher education providers are available via the links below:

[http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/  
EqualOpportunitiesUnit/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/EqualOpportunitiesUnit/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/)

[http://www.ulster.ac.uk/secretary/policyimplementation/equality/  
section75/equality\\_scheme.pdf](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/secretary/policyimplementation/equality/section75/equality_scheme.pdf)

<http://www.open.ac.uk/equality-diversity>

[http://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/AboutUs/Corporate/  
EqualityAndDiversity.aspx](http://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/AboutUs/Corporate/EqualityAndDiversity.aspx)

<http://www.nrc.ac.uk/images/uploads/equality-scheme.pdf>

<http://www.nwrc.ac.uk/Equality/scheme.html>

<http://www.src.ac.uk/equality/equality-scheme>

<http://www.swc.ac.uk/discover/public-information/equality-diversity>

[http://www.src.ac.uk/images/files/about\\_us/policies/Feb10/sts011\\_  
src\\_equality\\_diversity\\_policy\\_studentsissue\\_001.pdf](http://www.src.ac.uk/images/files/about_us/policies/Feb10/sts011_src_equality_diversity_policy_studentsissue_001.pdf)

## Question 1 continued

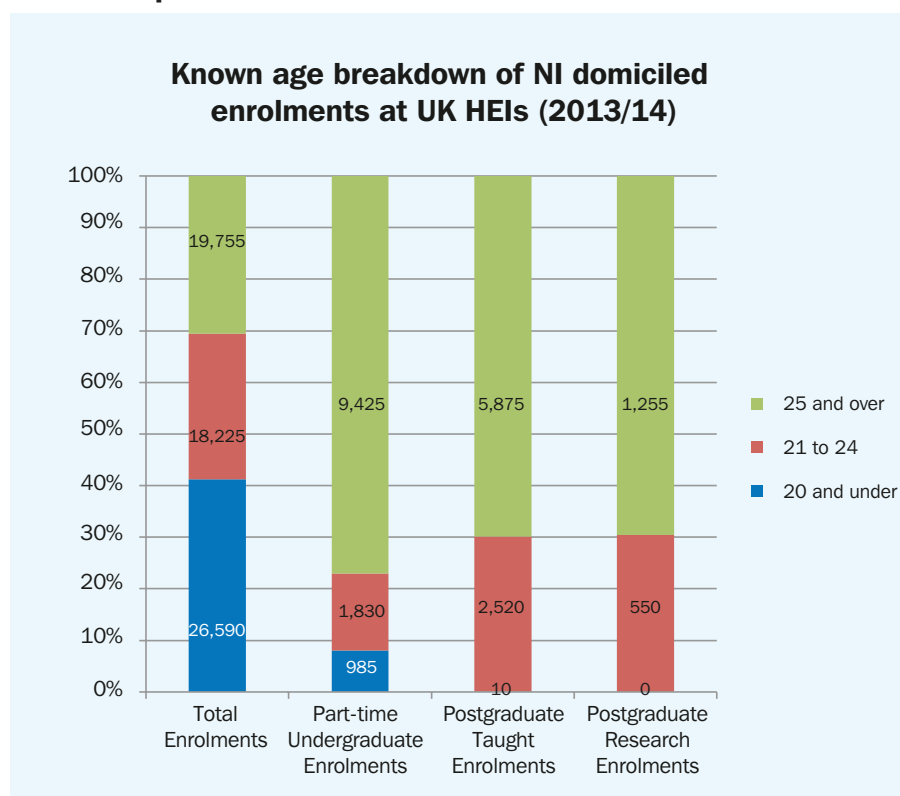
### Quantitative Evidence

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects information on Northern Ireland domiciled enrolments at UK higher education institutions. Information is available pertaining to most section 75 categories.

As shown below, three section 75 categories in particular – older people, people with dependents and people of a marital status other than single – could be better encouraged to share and engage together and with others as a result of the policies under consideration as they are more likely to utilise part-time and postgraduate study than other forms of higher education.

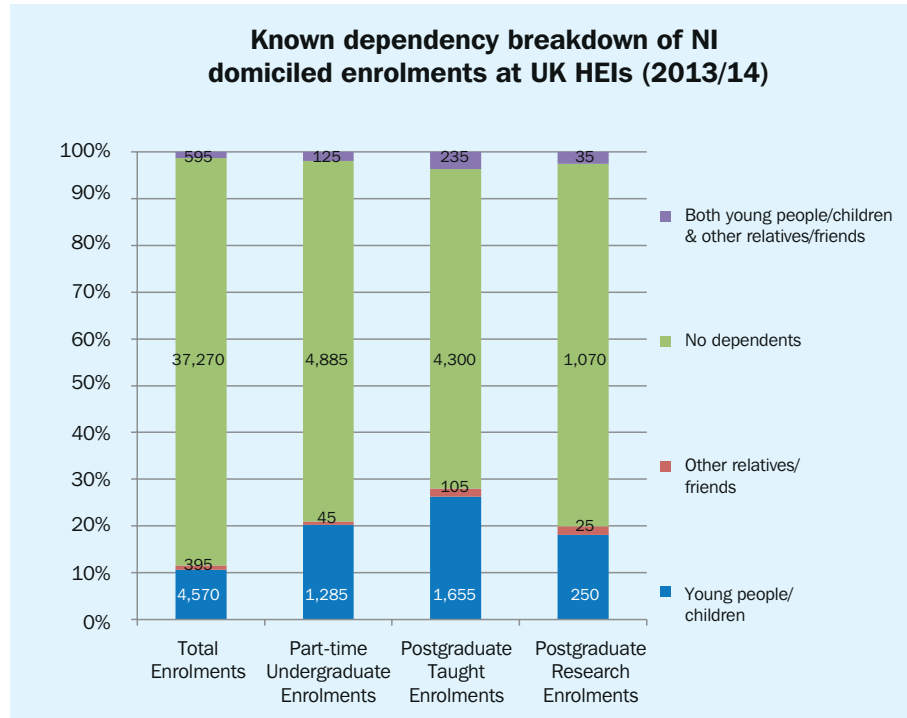
#### Section 75 Categories Supported by the Policy:

##### Older People

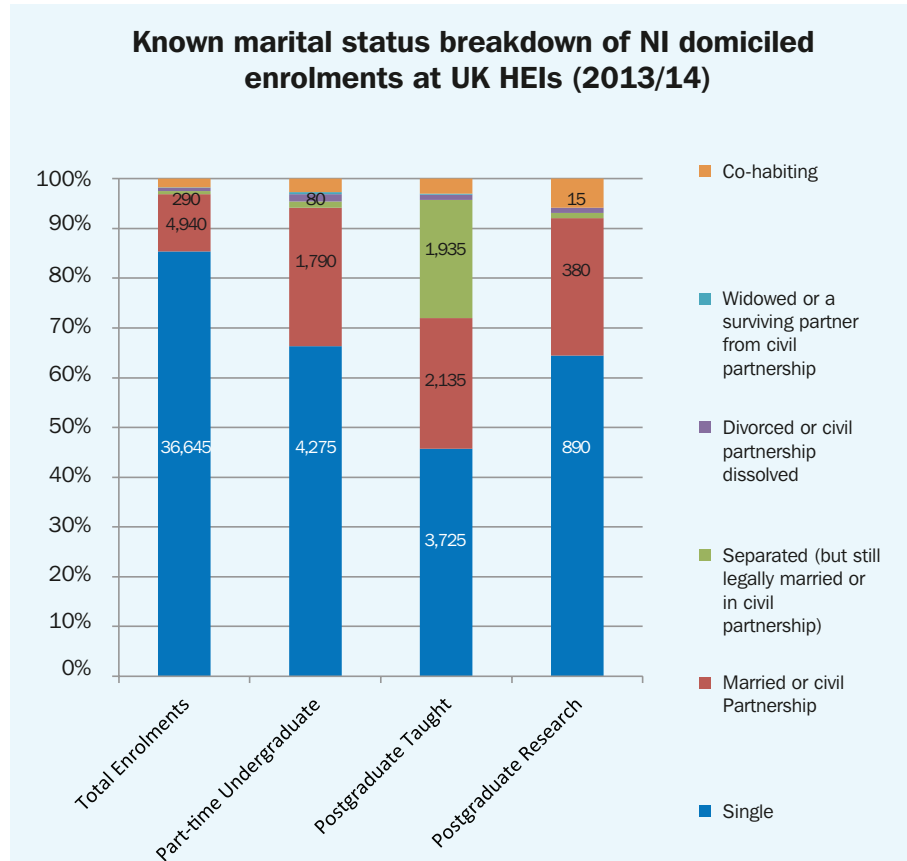


**Question 1 continued**

**People with Dependents**



**People of a Marital Status other than Single**

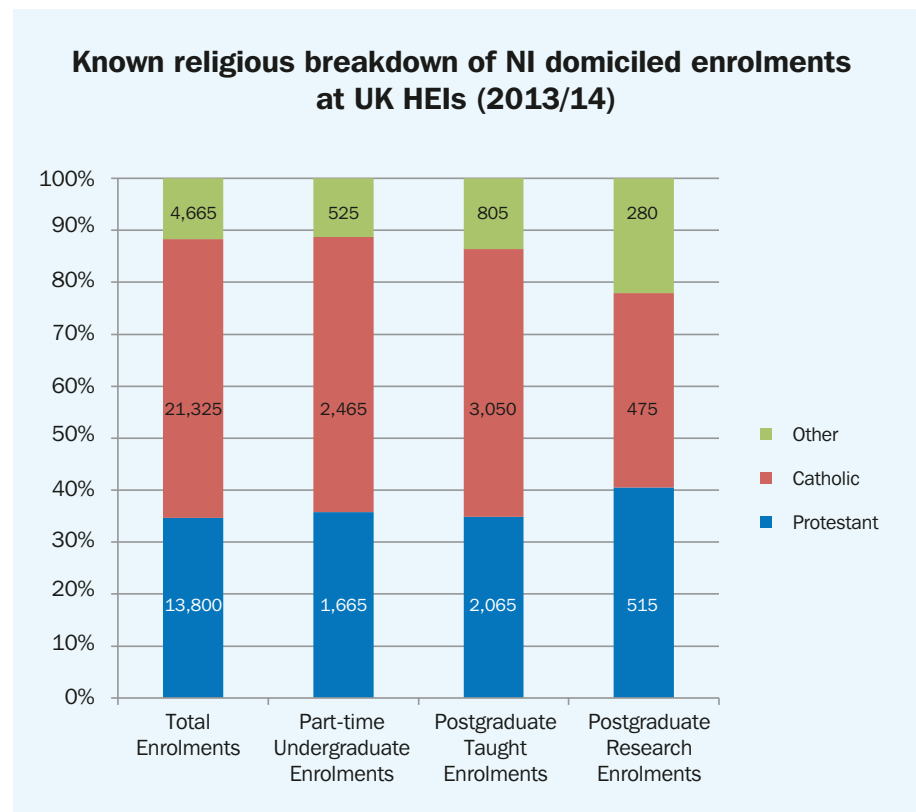


## Question 1 continued

### Section 75 Categories Not Disproportionately Impacted by the Policy:

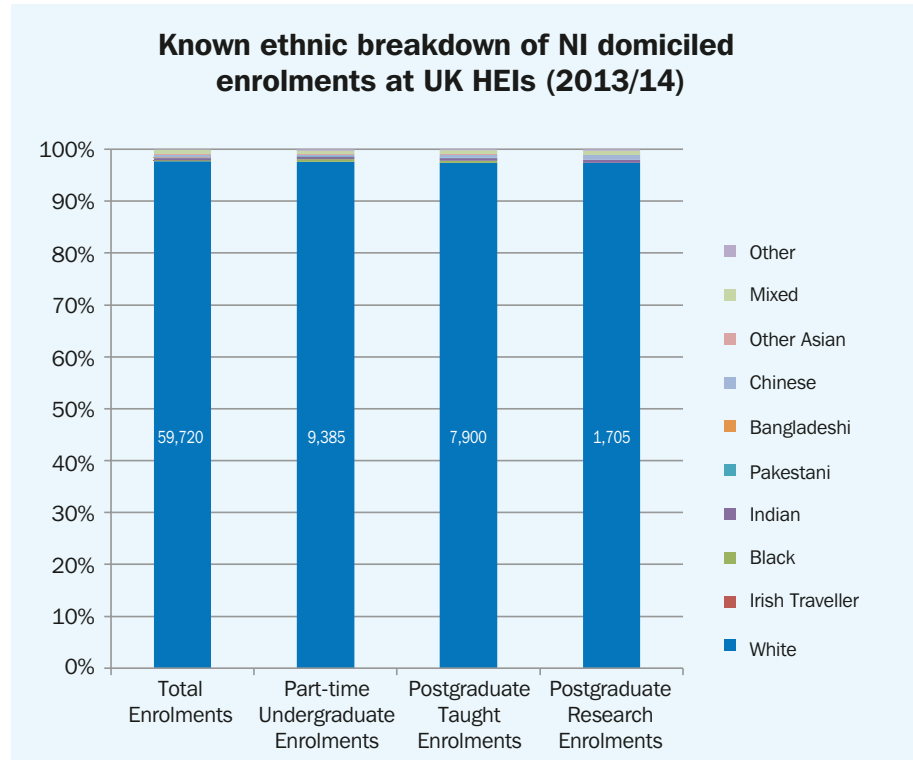
Across the remaining section 75 categories for which quantitative evidence is available no disproportionate impacts have been identified. It should be noted that quantitative evidence is unavailable for sexual orientation and political opinion. It is however common practice in Northern Ireland to link the latter to religious belief, and there is no qualitative or quantitative evidence to suggest that people of different sexual orientations rely on certain types of higher education over any others.

### Religious Belief

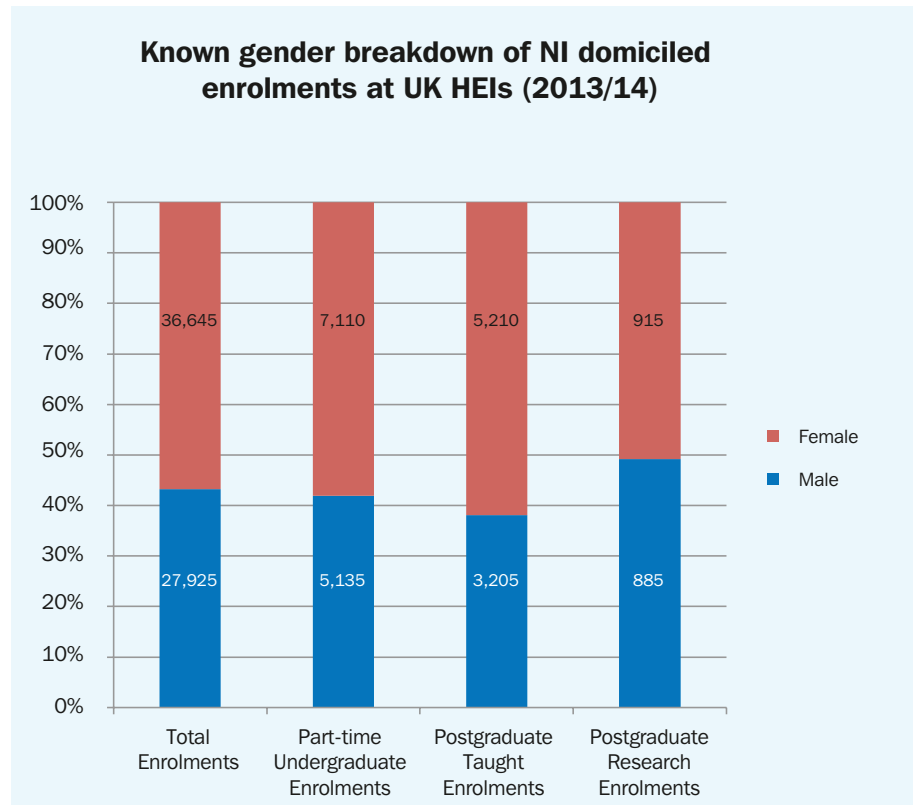


**Question 1 continued**

**Racial Grouping**

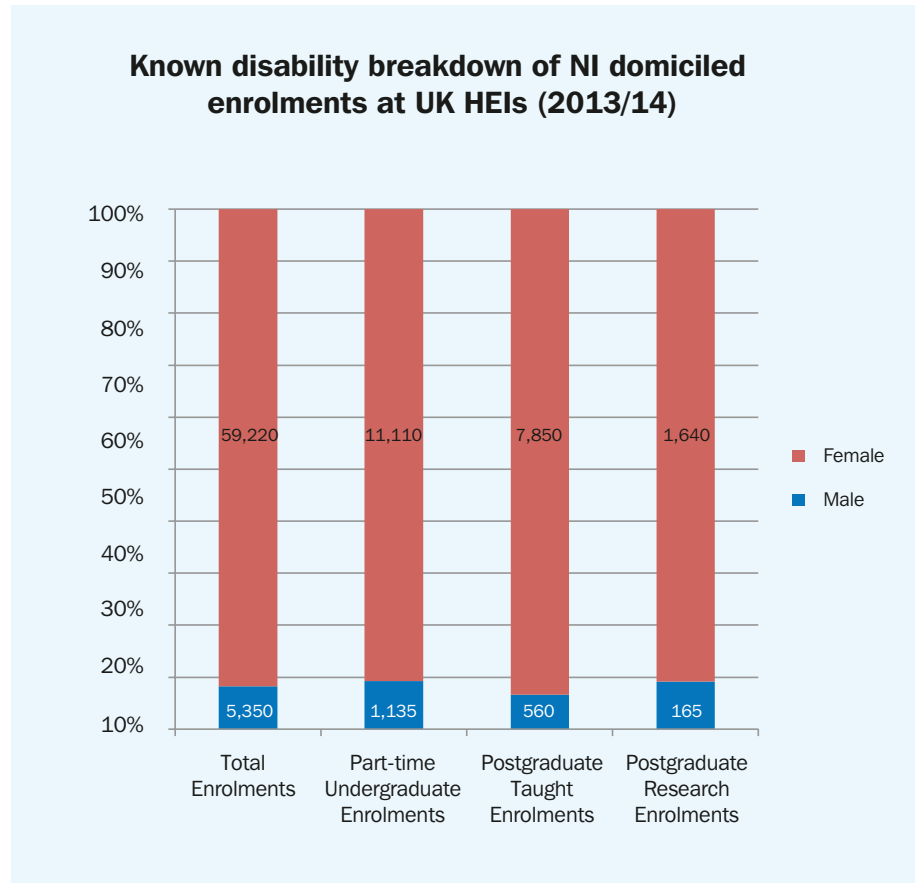


**Men and Women Generally**



**Question 1 continued**

**Disability**



The available quantitative evidence therefore clearly suggests that the policy, by improving access to part-time and postgraduate study, will promote sharing and engagement between individuals from a range of section 75 groups. For further information see the policy's accompanying equality screening template.

**Possible Mitigating Measures**

Mitigation not required.

**2. Does the proposed policy inadvertently create a situation where people categorised in different groups under Section 75(1) backgrounds will be accessing services or facilities on a segregated or separate basis?**

**Positive/  
Negative/ None**

**Positive**

**Qualitative  
Evidence**

The policies considered within the consultation are designed to ensure that access to higher education is based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay, irrespective of background or personal circumstance.

The policies under consideration in particular seek to address access issues to part-time and postgraduate study via the student finance system. While several section 75 groups – older people, people of a marital status other than single, and people with dependents – are demonstrably more reliant (see quantitative evidence) on these kinds of study, they are not precluded from other forms of study with different student finance packages. They therefore have access to the same student finance services as other section 75 groups.

---

**Quantitative  
Evidence**

See quantitative evidence for question one.

---

**Possible  
Mitigating  
Measures**

Mitigation not required.

---



### 3. Does the proposed policy remove or address any barriers to people sharing?

**Positive/  
Negative/ None**

**Positive**

**Qualitative  
Evidence**

The policies considered within the consultation are designed to ensure that access to higher education is based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay, irrespective of background or personal circumstance.

The policies under consideration in particular seek, via the student finance system, to address access issues to part-time and postgraduate study, on which several section 75 groups – older people, people of a marital status other than single, and people with dependents – are demonstrably more reliant (see quantitative evidence).

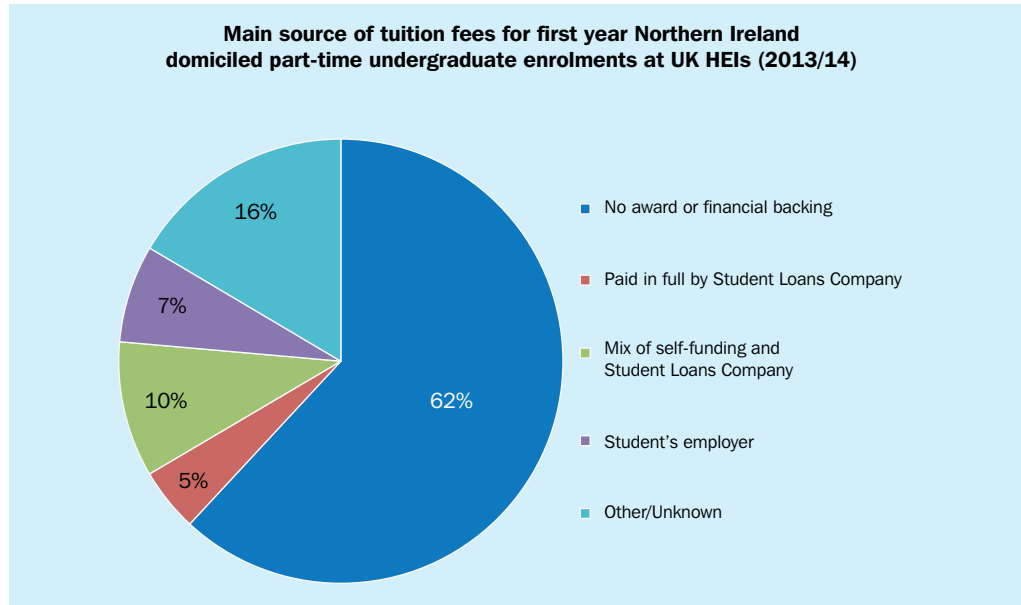
By aiding access for these groups through additional sources of finance, the policies considered in the consultation should remove significant financial barriers to them sharing in the benefits of higher education.

---

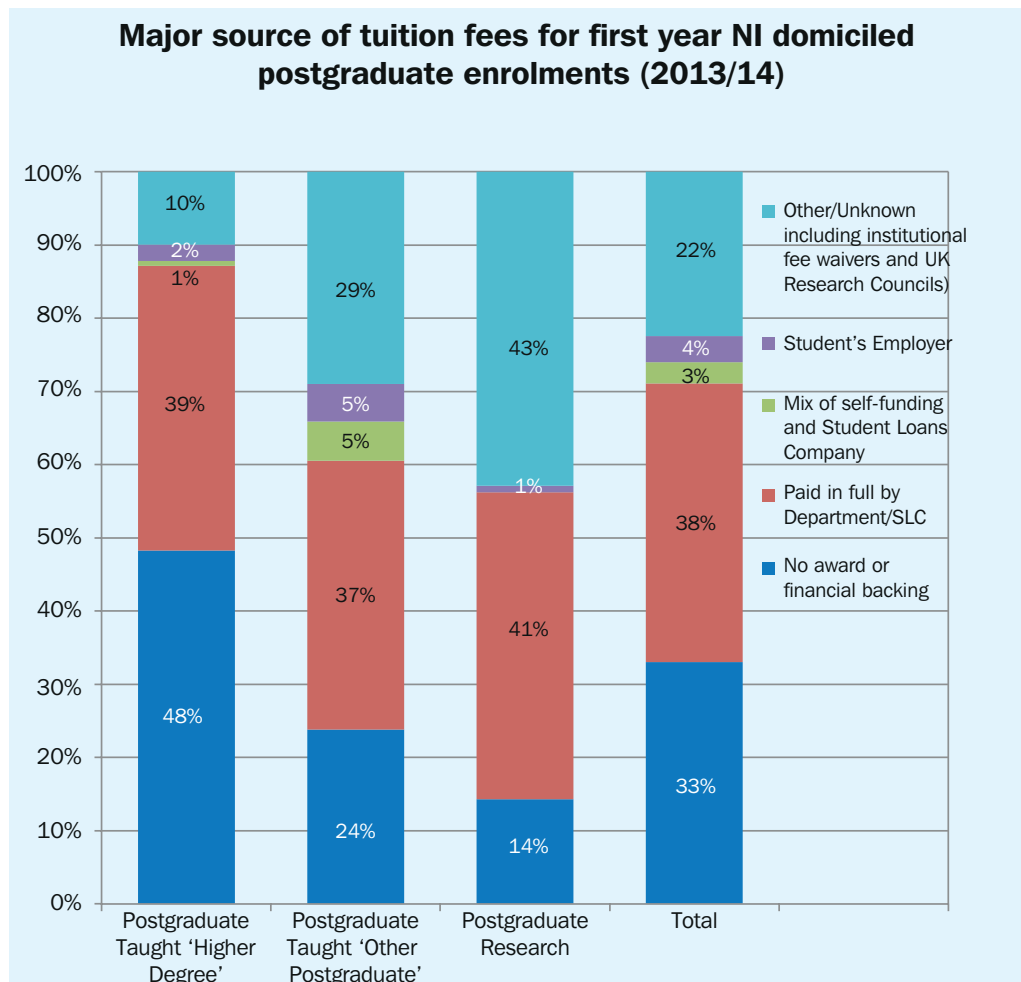
**Quantitative  
Evidence**

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) gathers information on the main sources of tuition fees for enrolled students. In 2013/14 some 62% of first year part-time undergraduate students reported no award or financial backing as the main source of their fees, i.e. the majority of them had to finance their studies themselves.

**Question 3 continued**



Similarly, some 33% of first year postgraduate students reported no award or financial backing for their tuition fees.



### Question 3 continued

Data from the Intentions After Graduation Survey in 2013 has now also been triangulated with data from the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education study to show how many final year students with ambitions of further study actually went on to fulfil those ambitions. It found that 17% of initial respondents intended to progress to further study but only 56% of them actually did. Of those who said they were considering further study, 65% said course fees would be a factor in their decision; of those who said they were unlikely to pursue further study, 61% cited fees as a factor putting them off.

The triangulation of these data sets clearly indicates that finance is a major barrier to further study, and, by extension, people from certain section 75 groups sharing with others. The policies considered within the consultation seek to remove this barrier.

---

**Possible  
Mitigating  
Measures**

Mitigation not required.

---

#### 4. Does the proposed policy inadvertently erect any barriers to people sharing

| Positive/<br>Negative/ None         | Positive  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Qualitative Evidence</b>         | <p>The policies considered within the consultation are designed to ensure that access to higher education is based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay, irrespective of background or personal circumstance.</p> <p>The policies under consideration in particular seek, via the student finance system, to address access issues to part-time and postgraduate study, on which several section 75 groups – older people, people of a marital status other than single, and people with dependents – are demonstrably more reliant (see quantitative evidence).</p> <p>By aiding access for these groups through additional sources of finance, the policies considered in the consultation should remove significant financial barriers to them sharing in the benefits of higher education. It is not anticipated that this will inadvertently erect any new barriers in their place.</p> <p>However any new policies emerging from the consultation will not be introduced prior to a thorough public consultation process which will help uncover any overlooked inadvertent consequences, should they exist. The impact of any new policies in terms of enrolment trends, student flows, etc will also be closely monitored.</p> |
| <b>Quantitative Evidence</b>        | <p>See quantitative evidence for questions one and three.</p>   |
| <b>Possible Mitigating Measures</b> | <p>Mitigation not required. Should any overlooked inadvertent consequences come to the Department’s attention at a later stage through a public consultation process, mitigating measures will be considered.</p>   |



Department for  
**Employment  
and Learning**  
[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

**SKILLS**  
TO SUCCEED

**THE DEPARTMENT:**

Our aim is to promote learning and skills, to prepare people for work and to support the economy.

This document is available in other formats upon request.