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Policy paper

2010 to 2015 government policy: higher education participation

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This is a copy of a document that stated a policy of the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government.

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The issue

Anyone with the ability who wants to go to university should have the chance to do so, whatever their economic or social background. The government wants to get more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education – in particular into the country’s most selective universities.

Actions

Government provides financial support to help young people from low income families go to university so that:

- students from families earning £25,000 or less get a full grant to help with living costs
- under our [National Scholarship Programme](#), universities and colleges will offer extra financial help to eligible students from disadvantaged backgrounds (this programme runs for 3 academic years from 2012 to 2013, 2013 to 2014 and 2014 to 2015)

Any university or college that wants to charge the highest amounts for tuition - between £6,000 and £9,000 for full-time students – must have an [access agreement](#) approved by the independent Director of Fair Access. This outlines what they will do to attract and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Institutions with access agreements will offer bursaries and other financial support, and carry out outreach work such as partnering with schools in disadvantaged areas of the country.

We're providing £25 million in 2014 to 2016 to stimulate the development of a national network of higher education institution led 'collaborative outreach partnerships'. Each partnership will include a single point of contact for schools, further education colleges and employers who want to access outreach opportunities.

In the [Autumn Statement 2013](#) we announced that we would provide 30,000 more student places for 2014 to 2015. We're also removing the cap on higher education student numbers in 2015 to 2016. This will ensure that an estimated 60,000 more young people can go to university every year.

Background

In May 2010 we published the [coalition agreement](#), which stated our aim to "attract a higher proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds" into higher education.

In October 2010 an independent review of the higher education funding system, '[Higher Education funding and student finance in England](#)', recommended increasing access to the UK's top institutions for students from low income backgrounds.

The review recommended that any university that charges higher tuition fees should increase financial support for students from low income families.

In June 2011 we carried out a consultation, '[Higher Education: students at the heart of the system](#)', on whether to implement the reforms of the review, 'Higher Education funding and student finance in England'.

You can read the outcome of the consultation in the 'Government response: students at the heart of the system'. It outlined plans to increase financial

support for students from low income families, through schemes such as the National Scholarship Programme, which runs for 3 years to 2014 to 2015.

In March 2014 we published a '[National strategy for access and student success](#)', developed by the [Higher Education Funding Council for England \(HEFCE\)](#) and the [Office for Fair Access \(OFFA\)](#). The strategy looks at how funding for widening access from the government, HEFCE, universities and further education colleges might be used more effectively through their access agreements. The main action proposed in the strategy is to develop the national network of collaborative outreach partnerships.

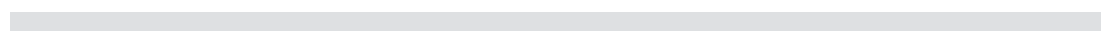
Appendix 1: access agreements

This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

An access agreement outlines what each publicly funded college or university that provides higher education will do to attract, support and retain students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Universities and colleges must have an access agreement if they are charging above the basic rate of tuition fee.

Universities will promote access through outreach work, such as partnering with schools in disadvantaged areas and offering financial and other support, such as bursaries. Universities have to set up an agreement with the [Office for Fair Access \(OFFA\)](#).

Appendix 2: National Scholarship Programme



This was a supporting detail page of the main policy document.

Students from low income families – households earning £25,000 or less - can apply to their university to see if they are eligible for support under the [National Scholarship Programme](#). Announcements in the [2013 Spending Review](#) signalled that the programme will only run for 3 years up to and including 2014 to 2015.

The programme is part of the government's policy to get more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education – in particular into the country's most selective universities. The support they're offering can be:

- a fee waiver or discount
- a free foundation year
- discounted accommodation or other types of university help
- a cash award (capped at £1,000 in the first 2 years of the programme, but unlimited in the third and final year)

Students must apply for an award for their first year of university. Each eligible student will receive a benefit of at least £3,000 if they are a full-time student (pro rata for part-time students). In the final year (2014 to 2015) the lowest award will be £2,000 (pro rata for part-time students).

Funding the programme

Government provides funding each financial year:

- £50 million in 2012 to 2013
- £100 million in 2013 to 2014
- £150 million from 2014 to 2015

Participating universities and colleges provide additional funding for the programme. This is known as 'match funding'. The National Scholarship Programme is open only to English higher education institutions that are publicly funded.

Monitoring the programme

The programme is run by the [Higher Education Funding Council for England](#). Higher education institutions have to supply data to the Funding Council to show which students they are funding.

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