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Northern Ireland University Budgets

1 Introduction

The following paper was requested by the Committee for Employment and Learning in order to provide details on the budgets for Northern Ireland's Universities - Queen's University Belfast (QUB); University of Ulster (UU); St. Mary's University College; and Stranmillis University College.

2 Background

Higher Education (HE) across the UK is undergoing a large number of changes as a result of the on-going financial difficulties created by the 2008 recession and UK Government policies which intend to apply market forces to the Higher Education sector.

Following the Comprehensive Spending Review and the publication of the revised Northern Ireland government budget, the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) made a large number of cuts across its portfolio, with a large percentage of these cuts focused on the Higher Education sector.

Tables 1 and 2 show DEL's budget for 2010-2015, including current and capital expenditure.

Table 1: DEL budget (broken down by area of spend) – Current Expenditure¹

Objective and Spending Area	2010-11 (£m)	2011-12 (£m)	2012-13 (£m)	2013-14 (£m)	2014-15 (£m)
Employment and Skills	381.9	359.1	356.1	366.3	378.8
Higher Education (including Teacher Training)	230.0	206.3	199.9	187.5	174.3
Student Support and Postgraduate Awards	153.8	190.6	193.6	213.7	242.3
Labour Market Services	33.2	31.3	30.6	31.0	31.3
Total	798.9	787.3	780.3	798.5	826.7

As can be seen in table 1 above current expenditure for Higher Education falls significantly from 2010-11 to 2014-15, with a drop of £55.7 million in the five year period.

Table 2: DEL budget (broken down by area of spend) – Capital Expenditure²

Objective and Spending Area	2011-12 (£m)	2012-13 (£m)	2013-14 (£m)	2014-15 (£m)
Employment and Skills	35.7	19.3	2.0	4.0
Higher Education (including Teacher Training)	5.0	12.5	15.0	23.0
Student Support and Postgraduate Awards	-	-	-	-
Labour Market Services	0.5	0.5	1.5	1.3
Total	41.2	32.3	18.5	28.3

¹ Department for Finance and Personnel, Budget 2011-15 Department for Employment and Learning 4th March 2011

² Ibid

The cuts in the Higher Education Budget are expected to be met in two ways, with £28 million of efficiency savings and remaining £40 million expected to be met through the introduction of higher tuition fees for students.

In a letter provided to RaISe by the Minister for Employment and Learning, it is stated that:

It should be emphasised that the £28 million is a cash reduction to the Higher Education sector budgets, and in addition to this the Universities will have to find the resources themselves to cover pay and price movements, superannuation, ERNIC, VAT and other inflationary pressures. This explains the real term 22% operational efficiency savings³.

Table 3 provides Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on the recurrent income of NI Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) since 2005. The funding council grant reflects income provided by the government and includes teaching and research grants.

As can be seen in Table 3, direct government funding through the council grant for 2008/09 provides 41.8% of the income received by the HEI's. Indirect Government funding is provided through tuition fees (by way of the Student Loans Company). For 2008/09 funding council grants and tuition fees provided 63.6% of HEI funding in comparison to 58.5% in 2005/06.

Table 3: Recurrent Income of NI HEI's from 2005/06 to 2008/09⁴

	2005/06 (£m)	2006/07 (£m)	2007/08 (£m)	2008/09 (£m)
Funding Council Grant	191.2	200.8	198.2	213.8
Tuition Fees	46.4	60.7	74.6	111.3
Other Fees and Support Grants	19.2	19.1	20.2	0
Endowment and Investment Income	3.9	5.2	10.1	9.0
Research Grants and Contracts	70.1	69.7	75.2	80.3
Other Income	75.4	79.1	87.4	97
Total	406.3	434.6	465.7	511.3

³ Correspondence from the Minister for Employment and Learning, 13th June 2011

⁴ Higher Education Statistics Agency, Higher Education: Statistics for the United Kingdom 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09, Table 15 and Table 17 (2008/09) Please note, due to rounding errors some totals do not add up – the figures shown are those provided in the original HESA tables.

3 Queen's University Belfast

Table 4 below shows the QUB recurrent grant for the academic years 2010-11 and 2011-12⁵.

QUB will have a reduction in its recurrent grant of 7.62%, with large percentage cuts in areas such as research funding (10.09%) and additional funded places becoming a cost to the University of £86,171.

It should also be noted that Widening Participation and students with Disabilities take a significant reduction in funding of 15.35%, a cash sum of £98,922.

Table 4: QUB recurrent grant for 2010-12

	2010-11 (£)	2011-12 (£)	Percentage Change (%) between 2010-11 and 2011-12
Teaching Funds			
Core Funding	67,571,042	63,624,628	-5.84
Additional funded places	88,190	-86,171	-197.71
Widening participation and students with disabilities	644,348	545,426	-15.35
Teaching enhancement and student success	287,976	282,185	-2.01
Other targeted allocations	4,920,491	4,772,179	-3.01
Total Teaching funding	73,512,047	69,138,247	-5.95
Research funds			
Quality related research	32,550,766	30,139,233	-7.41
Charities support element	3,403,153	3,328,060	-2.21
Sustainable Research Fund	1,268,027	-	
Total Research funding	37,221,946	33,467,293	-10.09
Moderation of teaching and research	-	-314,603	
Total recurrent grant	110,733,993	102,290,937	-7.62

4 University of Ulster

Table 5 details the recurrent grant funding for the University of Ulster for academic years 2010-11 and 2011-12⁶.

⁵ Department for Employment and Learning Grant letter to Queen's University Belfast for 2010-11 and 2011-12. Please note, the figures for 2011-12 are provisional and as such may be subject to change.

⁶ Department for Employment and Learning Grant letter to University of Ulster for 2010-11 and 2011-12. Please note, the figures for 2011-12 are provisional and as such may be subject to change.

Table 5: University of Ulster recurrent grant for 2010-12

	2010-11 (£)	2011-12 (£)	Percentage Change (%) between 2010-11 and 2011-12
Teaching Funds			
Core Funding	65,605,909	61,669,554	-6.00
Additional funded places	0	-101,596	
Widening participation and students with disabilities	1,012,678	949,791	-6.21
Teaching enhancement and student success	312,022	281,813	-9.68
Other targeted allocations	3,035,917	2,706,844	-10.84
Total Teaching funding	69,966,526	65,506,406	-6.37
Research funds			
Quality related research	18,183,233	16,593,521	-8.74
Charities support element	784,556	610,319	-22.21
Sustainable Research Fund	739,082	-	
Total Research funding	19,706,871	17,203,840	-12.70
Total Recurrent Grant	89,673,397	83,250,495	-7.16

The University of Ulster takes a slightly smaller budget reduction than QUB, with an overall drop in recurrent grant funding of 7.16%. The largest reduction in spend is in research with a fall of 12.7%. As with QUB, a large part of this reduction is as a result of the cutting of the Sustainable Research Fund for the year. The Charities support element also takes a significant cut of 22.21%.

5 St Marys University College

Table 6 details the recurrent grant funding for St. Mary's for academic years 2010-11 and 2011-12⁷.

Table 6: St. Mary's University College recurrent grant for 2010-12

	2010-11 (£)	2011-12 (£)	Percentage Change (%) between 2010-11 and 2011-12
Recurrent plus Conversion	5,176,445	4,864,732	-6.02
Widening Participation	67,241	63,207	-6.00
Widening Access	10,000	10,000	0.00
DMU	30,000	28,200	-6.00
International Awareness	40,000	37,600	-6.00
Irish Medium Education	100,000	94,000	-6.00
Total	5,423,686	5,097,793	-6.01
Moderation funding	-	526	
Total Grant payable	5,423,686	5,098,265	-6.00

⁷ Department for Employment and Learning Grant letter to St. Mary's University College for 2010-11 and 2011-12. Please note, the figures for 2011-12 are provisional and as such may be subject to change.

St. Mary's has a 6% reduction in its year on year budget, with no change in Widening Access.

6 Stranmillis University College

Table 7 details the recurrent grant funding for Stranmillis for academic years 2010-11 and 2011-12⁸.

As with St. Mary's, Stranmillis has a 6% reduction in its budget. The reductions are spread evenly across the various budget items, with Widening Access continuing to receive funding.

Table 7: Stranmillis University College recurrent grant for 2010-12

	2010-11 (£)	2011-12 (£)	Percentage Change (%) between 2010-11 and 2011-12
Recurrent plus Conversion	4,917,982	4,657,570	-5.30
Widening Participation	50,314	47,295	-6.00
Widening Access	10,000	10,000	0.00
Diversity and Mutual Understanding	30,000	28,200	-6.00
International Awareness	40,000	37,600	-6.00
Rates	302,940	284,764	-6.00
Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies	8,630	8,112	-6.00
Recurrent Funding for Research	65,296	TBA	
Total Allocation	5,425,162	5,073,541	-6.48
Conversion Funding	260,481	270,963	4.02
Total Grant	5,685,643	5,344,504	-6.00

⁸ Department for Employment and Learning Grant letter to Stranmillis for 2010-11 and 2011-12. Please note, the figures for 2011-12 are provisional and as such may be subject to change.