



Department
for Education

Student summary of the OfS regulatory framework consultation

Introduction

Whether you are an 18-year-old undergraduate, a mature part-time learner, or an international PhD candidate, all students should have a higher education experience that is positive and life transforming. The government wants to make sure that the higher education system serves your needs effectively, and one way it is doing so is by establishing a new regulator called the Office for Students (OfS). The OfS derives its powers from the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, and will regulate higher education in England (though it does not set tuition fees or other government policy).

We are consulting on how the new OfS will regulate English higher education providers. The OfS will set the rules about what registered providers can and can't do, and will intervene when it thinks student interests – short, medium or long term – are at risk.

The [consultation document](#) sets out a proposed approach for the OfS, which anyone who is interested can share their thoughts on. The OfS is intended to regulate in the interests of students; we want to make sure that you have been able to share your views to inform its design and approach to regulation.

The consultation will close at **midnight on 22 December 2017**. After this, the OfS will consider the responses and review them when finalising its approach to regulation.

This summary sets out the proposals we think are most relevant to you, as a student. It also contains a summary of the questions we'd particularly like your views on, and a short guide on how to access the full consultation, and how to respond.

Main proposals

The consultation includes proposals intended to make sure that:

- Your voice will be heard and your interests reflected throughout the OfS, influencing everything from how it is designed (chapter 2, paragraphs 72 to 75) to how it monitors providers (chapter 5 part C, especially paragraphs 232 and 244)
- Disadvantaged students will be given more help before they start to access higher education, more help while they are there to succeed in their studies, and more help while they are there to progress to a good job or further study when they finish (chapter 1, paragraphs 8 to 13, 90 and 153 to 160)

- Your provider will have to meet high minimum bars for quality if it wants its students to have access to student loans (chapter 1, paragraphs 14 to 25, chapter 4, especially paragraphs 148 and 191), and the OfS will act quickly and decisively if you are at risk of receiving an educational experience that does not meet this bar (chapter 5 part E, paragraphs 277 to 308)
- There are clear and fair contracts between you and your provider, covering what you can expect to receive on your course (chapter 1, box E)
- You have access to information on how you can transfer to another course, or to another provider (chapter 2, paragraphs 92 to 100)
- It will be easier for you to compare courses and providers, thanks to new information (like Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework ratings for each subject at a provider) and better presentation of existing information (chapter 2, paragraphs 77 to 85)
- Your provider will have to publish statements on how it provides value for money (chapter 1, paragraphs 29 to 34)
- Your provider will have to have a Student Protection Plan to protect you and make sure you are able to finish your studies, even if they close down (chapter 5 part F, paragraphs 309 to 316)

Questions

We would like to hear your views on all of the proposals put forward in the consultation. The consultation poses 27 individual questions for you to respond to. We welcome answers on all of the questions posed, but think questions 1 to 10 and 18 to 20 will be most important for students. They relate to the following topics:

- Whether the four proposed objectives, and their corresponding risks, for the OfS (listed below) are the right ones (see question 1)

1. All students, from all backgrounds, are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education
2. All students, from all backgrounds, receive a high quality academic experience, and their qualifications hold their value over time in line with sector-recognised standards
3. All students, from all backgrounds, have their interests as consumers protected while they study, including in the event of provider, campus, or course closure
4. All students, from all backgrounds, receive value for money

- What the OfS should do to improve access to, and participation in, higher education for disadvantaged students (see question 2)
- How the OfS should assess the quality of education at a provider (see question 3)
- Whether the OfS should explore alternative approaches to degree classifications, including Grade Point Average (see question 4)
- The role consumer law plays in enhancing students' rights, including in relation to fair and clear contracts, and what the OfS can do to ensure providers are complying with their obligations consistently (see question 5)
- What the OfS should do to ensure you receive value for money (see question 6)
- Whether there should be a requirement for providers about their senior staff remuneration, like having to provide justifications for the salaries of all staff paid over £150k (see question 7)
- What you think the potential equality impacts of the proposals are, including whether they are discriminatory or could impact on equality of opportunity (see question 8)
- Whether the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) should be made compulsory for some providers over a certain size (see question 9)
- How the OfS should encourage and raise awareness about the ability of students to transfer to another course or another provider (see question 10)
- What rules (imposed by registration conditions) different types of providers must comply with (see question 18)
- How the OfS should monitor providers (see question 19)
- When and how the OfS should make interventions relating to a provider (see question 20)

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit www.education.gov.uk/consultations to submit your response.

Accessing the full consultation

The consultation is titled 'Securing student success: risk-based regulation for teaching excellence, social mobility and informed choice in higher education'.

You can access and respond to the full document online, at <https://consult.education.gov.uk/higher-education/higher-education-regulatory-framework>

We anticipate that, following consideration of all responses to the consultation, the OfS will publish the following in Spring 2018:

- a response to the consultation
- its regulatory framework and registration conditions