

What will be the effect on stakeholders of the proposed change in fees and fundin...

[Education](#)



## **What will be the effect on stakeholders of the proposed change in fees and funding for UK undergraduate degrees**

Research Proposal Outline Research Question: What will be the effect on stakeholders of the proposed change in fees and funding for UK

undergraduate degrees? I. Research Questions Since the second half of 2010, dramatic changes have occurred in higher education (HE) policies in the United Kingdom (UK). Although recent policy reforms in higher education have not been totally unexpected, their impact has far-reaching consequences to various stakeholders. With the expansion of HE happening in most OECD countries, there has been increasing shift towards relying on fees from students and the increase in contingency student loans (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003). Government has realised the budgetary implications, and looked for solutions in countries like the United States (US) where HE is considered an individual investment. Thus, when Lord Browne pushed forward his ' recommendations for sustainable funding for higher education', the coalition government accepted almost all proposals (Secured Loans, UK 2010). Central to these is that the government must cease making HE part of the state's welfare (Secured Loans UK, 2010). Trade unions lament that funding cuts in HE will have serious impact on the education of the students (BBC, 2010). They predict that as many as 200, 000 students will miss out on higher education. Administrators also fear that quality of education will suffer, especially for taught courses in comparison with research-based universities (BBC, 2011). Question one is therefore, with all these points highlighted, why is government pushing for such policy reforms? There are different theoretical underpinnings and realities that bear

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relevance on the new policy of higher education funding in the UK. On the one hand, the sociology of education highlights the social and cultural capital achieved through higher education. On the other hand, there exists a human capital agenda that drives the economic purposes behind education.

Embedded within these theories is how education is used as a tool in the society, and how it benefits individuals and societies. Given these points, the following questions will be answered by the dissertation. What will be the effect on stakeholders of the proposed changes in fees and funding for UK undergraduate degrees? By stakeholders, I include the students, universities, government, employers, tax payers and the society. To be able to answer this question, I pose two guiding questions: (1) What are the reasons for the policy changes in HE funding? (2) What are the perceived impacts of those policy changes in HE? II. Introductory Literature Review A. The Development of UK's Policy on HE Funding As Wyness states, ' the subject of how to finance HE has been on the agenda of successive UK governments since the 1960's' (2010, 3). Wyness also documents the major policy changes in funding of HE in the UK from the 1960s to 2009. Changes in funding policies were driven by the following goals: ' to increase university funding per head, to increase absolute volumes of students, and to improve equity in the higher education sector in terms of the socio-economic status of participants' (Wyness, 2010, 5). His report also notes that whilst there was a steady increase in participation rate in HE from the 1960's to 2006, government funding gradually decreased by 1990 and this forms the contextualised background to this proposal This section of the literature review outlines the major policies in HE funding from the 1960's to the present. It then presents

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data on participation rates and the amount of government spending/funding in HE. It draws from different research as well as data from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. B. Theoretical Underpinnings This section will discuss the major theoretical underpinnings behind higher education. It draws from the sociology of education and the works of Emile Durkheim and George Psacharopoulos. It contrasts the human capital and social capital theories of education. It then moves on towards the function of education in society and how it has responded to democratic and liberal ideologies. This section will relate the theories to the policy changes presently being implemented and demonstrates the theoretical frameworks that have guided policy adaptation in HE funding. The second section of this essay then looks at the market adaptation that has been driving policy changes in higher education. It looks at trends and models of policy borrowing that has happened in major OECD countries, and tries to determine the points of convergences. It looks at how economic changes --- internally and externally --- impact on policy strategies in HE. III.

Methodology The research will use both quantitative and qualitative data.

From a quantitative approach, statistical data on participation rates and funding will be used to demonstrate changes over time in the figures.

Quantitative data is used to measure changes over time at a macro-level (Bray and Mason, 2007) that will make inferences on the HE situation in the UK. Data on participation rates, funding per student over time and HE funding over time will be analysed. Qualitative approaches will also be used to analyse documents. Discourse analysis will be used to examine policy documents. Furthermore, it is essential to look at the context in which major

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policy stances were adopted and implemented. If necessary and possible, interviews will be conducted to examine the impact of policy strategies. IV. Resources and Access The study will be confined to secondary data however, not all of the data may be available from the library. Thus, it is necessary to contact relevant agencies for statistical data and policy documents.

Furthermore, interviews will be conducted with relevant informants. V.

Timetable Weeks Tasks 1 - 6 Data Gathering : Literature Search of

Secondary Data Ask permission (if necessary) to access statistical data from relevant agencies 7 - 8 Writing up of Introduction, Literature Review and

Methodology Submission of draft to Supervisor Supervision Meetings 9 - 13

Data gathering for additional materials based on meeting Revision of

Introduction, Literature Review and Methodology Writing of analysis 14 - 15

Submission of draft which includes analysis of data Supervision meetings

and feedback 16 - 19 Revision of Analysis Writing of Conclusion 20 - 21

Submission of Draft of research Feedback/Supervision 22 - 23 Revisions;

Submission of final research VI. References BBC. 2010. Protest at Education Funding Cuts, BBC Mobile News Education & Family. Available from:

[Accessed on 23 April 2011]. Greenaway, D. & Haynes, M., 2003. Funding Higher Education in the UK: The Role of Fees and Loans. *The Economic Journal*, 113, pp. F150-F166.

Harrison, A., 2011. England's universities face funding cuts of 12%, BBC Mobile News Education & Family. Available from:

[Accessed on 23 April 2011]. OECD, 1994. *School: A Matter of Choice*. Paris:

OECD Secured Loan UK Staff, 2010. Tuition Fees: Are Students Right to be Protesting?, Secured Loans UK. Available from: [Accessed on 29 April 2011].

Wyness, G., 2010. *Policy Changes in UK Higher Education Funding, 1963-*

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2009, DQSS Working Paper No. 10-15. Available from: [Accessed on 24 April 2011]. Critical Reflection At the turn of the 21st century, 'globalisation' has become a buzz-word (Green, 2007). It has become a phenomenon that has been considered inevitable (Ibid). It can be defined as the increase in flow of capital, labour and activities across nations (Green, 2007). Resultantly, institutions, such as those involved in education which was once considered under 'welfare' and controlled by the state, are becoming increasingly market-driven. In HE, reforms across countries have come in the form of marketisation, corporatisation and privatisation (Mok, 2005). HE has been transformed to mimic the dynamics of an institution for business. This research is a contribution to help ameliorate the dilemma that HE institutions and other stakeholders are currently facing. There has been little research made on the policy change in HE funding in the UK and this may be because it is a current and hot debate that lacks empirical data. I hope that this proposed research will provide answers to the fundamental questions that are driving the market- of HE institutions. By exploring the questions that I pose in this research, I hope to draw out what will make HE institutions better providers of education in the increasingly knowledge-based economy. Currently, I am seeking employment in higher or further education (FE) service providers. . I hope that this research will provide me with a useful insight into the management of education institutions. Researching within this area will also provide me with relevant networks that will facilitate and enhance future work opportunities. My past experience in higher education is also a good background to help me contextualise the research that I plan to undertake. In addition, the business administration courses that I have taken

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will be of use in the analysis required to successfully complete this proposed research. My research skills are also well developed and I am adept in quantitative methodology. However I will need more information on qualitative approaches and in order to overcome my present deficiency in this area I will attend lectures on policy discourse and content analysis. In addition, I will have to develop my skills in using the two methodologies in combination. With proper time management skills, I believe that this research project will be feasible. Secondary data is available, but I recognise the importance of finding the proper data that will address the research question. To be able to do this, I might have to sort through a large amount of material and decide which ones are relevant and which are not. The exercise will help me to refine and focus my area of research. References: Bray, M, Adamson, B. & Mason, M. (eds.), 2007 Comparative education research: Approaches and methods. Hong Kong, China: Comparative Education Research Centre. Green, A., 2007. ' Globalisation and the changing nature of the state in East Asia'. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 5(1), pp. 23-38. Mok, K. H, 2005. ' Introduction: Globalization, changing governance and the nation state'. In Mok, K. H. & James, R. (eds.) *Globalization and higher education in East Asia*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish International (Singapore) Private Limited.