

---

# Say **NO** to **INTO**

---

## **Why you should be worried about a joint venture between York and INTO**

---

The University of York is on the verge of signing up to a joint venture with the private company INTO University Partnerships.

This would mean both York and INTO committing capital to a new company that would recruit and teach international students on 'pathway courses', starting in 2015.

Informed local debate on this vital issue is currently being stifled by the use of the 'commercial in confidence' provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. The minutes of the recent Senate discussion of INTO have been withheld from public view. We should be asking, 'What is there to hide?'

### **Who are INTO?**

INTO is a private company that's currently 75% owned by 'entrepreneur' Andrew Colin and 25% by a US private equity fund called Leeds Equity Partners. Jeffrey Leeds, the fund's founder, is now a director at INTO.

Leeds Equity Partners also part own the massive US for-profit company Education Management Corporation, currently being sued and investigated by a number of US state and federal agencies in connection with poor performance.

INTO has joint ventures with Exeter, Newcastle, UEA, Glasgow Caledonian, City and Queen's University Belfast. These joint ventures are 50:50 owned by INTO and their partner universities. That means that profits – and losses – are borne equally by both partners.



## Why does UCU oppose INTO partnerships?

In common with other private companies, INTO put the bottom line first. Their staff are paid less and employed on worse contracts than comparable university staff.

We have fought to protect those staff who are transferred to INTO joint ventures.

But we also oppose these joint ventures because we believe they pose a massive risk to partner universities.

## What are the risks of an INTO joint venture?

### Risks to university reputation

Because they are a private company, INTO's interest lies in recruiting as many international students as possible and getting as many as possible onto university courses.

While the university says it will control and maintain standards, UCU believes that the financial pressure to get students onto undergraduate courses will become too great.

At Exeter, the university council recently expressed concern that students coming via INTO were now of a lower quality than those recruited by the university.

### Risks to finances

Some INTO joint ventures are now running profitably, but even these are still dependent on long-term loans from their partners.

And other INTO ventures have shown years of losses, investments written off and even failure.

- In 2009, Manchester College pulled out of a joint venture with INTO after it posted losses of £1.4 million.
- In January this year, UEA pulled out of a joint venture in London having lost

£2.5 million over two years and written off a further £3 million that it invested late last year trying to save the project.

- City University's INTO joint venture has made three successive years of losses and now has not got enough money to pay its debts. It is entirely dependent on continued lending from the university and INTO to keep afloat.
- Queen's Belfast's joint venture also continues to make losses and is also dependent on lending from its partners to keep going.

These INTO joint ventures have cost millions in operating losses and lost investment and are dependent on continued lending from their universities.

That money can only come from the university's general budgets and the costs of failure will be paid by university staff.

### An increasingly risky partner

Now that it is partly owned by a private equity fund, INTO will become even more geared toward growth at any cost.

The University of York is part of that plan and INTO want to trade with the university's finances and with its reputation.

## UCU says no to INTO

There is nothing inevitable about this joint venture. It can be stopped. It needs informed debate. It needs UCU members to say no.

INTO have been rebuffed by many universities, often with the help of active campaigns by UCU and our allies. At Oxford Brookes, Essex, Goldsmiths and De Montfort universities active UCU campaigning was a critical factor in persuading the university to rethink.

# SAY NO TO INTO AT YORK

