

**EDUCATION FOR
THE FUTURE**

**UCU'S
MANIFESTO FOR
POST-SCHOOL
EDUCATION**

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INTRODUCTION

The University and College Union is the largest trade union and professional association for academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers and academic-related staff working in further, adult, prison, land-based and higher education throughout the UK.

Gordon Brown, prime minister:
“Investing in education comes first... to meet and master the global challenge, the most important investment in our economy and in our future and the most pivotal and important reforms we can make will be in the education of our children and young people.”

2006 Budget speech, when chancellor of the exchequer

We are calling on all parliamentary candidates in the general election to pledge themselves to our vision of post-school education.

That vision is founded on a fundamental belief in the intrinsic value of education as a force for the enhancement of the lives of individuals, the liberation of their talents and the realisation of a truly civilised, socially responsible, fair and prosperous society.

We also make no apology for pointing out the relationship between the quality of educational provision and the quality of the professionals who provide it.

Recruitment of good teachers, researchers and related staff cannot be separated from decent pay and conditions and from the need to take serious account of the views of professional practitioners at all levels of decision making and policy formation. We also call on providers to do far more to end pay inequality between men and women; between white and black staff and between non-disabled and disabled staff.

Also, like all public bodies, colleges and universities have a legal duty to promote equality and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, gender and disability. UCU calls on all education providers to take seriously the implementation of these obligations and to engage all relevant stakeholders, including trade unions, in this work. Equality is at the heart of our vision.

We are determined to defend these values against attacks from narrow utilitarian concepts of education which would judge its worth solely on its contribution to ‘business’ and would reduce learners to ‘customers’. We have deliberately illustrated this manifesto with positive quotations about the value of education from political leaders and we expect them to practice what they preach.

As the country continues to suffer from the effects of the worst economic

David Willetts, shadow secretary of state for innovation, universities and skills:

“Politicians and commentators are guilty of focusing too much on the utilitarian case for education. Although it is clearly good for raising individuals’ incomes, good for making the nation prosperous and can raise social mobility, one of the key benefits of education is education itself. Mastering a body of knowledge, making sense of things, developing and exercising the mind, mastering a skill, responding to great art or science—these are what make education worthwhile. This is why, when we have talked about education exclusively in terms of league tables and targets, we have separated ourselves from parents and teachers who feel that there is something missing. Much of what is valuable in education cannot be measured in tests and league tables, just as the value of life is not only about prices and markets.” 5 September 2006

recession since the 1930s, the case for renewed investment in our public education system is overwhelming. Our colleges and universities are key drivers of economic recovery, since they are the main sources of the skilled workers and professionals on which that recovery will depend. They also have a key part to play in environmental education, in the training and retraining of people for 'green jobs', and also of course in researching climate change and our response to it.

Continuation in education beyond compulsory schooling determines the life chances of individuals. Our society is more unequal than ever: improving access to education, and the quality of the education on offer, is the basis for the creation of a fair society and for ending the massive waste of talent that characterises our current system. We also know that lifelong participation in education improves people's health and well-being and makes them more engaged as citizens, thus strengthening our democracy.

Our colleges and universities are also the main source of critical thought, innovative ideas and both basic and applied research. It is crucial for the UK's cultural and economic future that support for this work continues and is expanded.

We prepare this manifesto in a political atmosphere in which education is under serious threat. The talk is of cuts to public services, including education, of making students pay more for courses, of depriving some of our best researchers of funding because they cannot demonstrate an immediate economic benefit from their work.

The system continues to be blighted by poor and excessive management and by funding arrangements, particularly in further education, which are constantly changing, creating permanent instability and making sensible planning virtually impossible. Money better spent on the core functions of teaching, learning and research is being wasted on quangos, consultants and form-filling.

The current experience is of departmental closures in such vital areas as adult and continuing education, of thousands of redundancies of college and university lecturers, of discrimination against part-time students and older students eager to learn for its own sake.

Most seriously and damaging of all is the experience of huge increases in youth and graduate unemployment and the scandalous exclusion in summer 2009 of an estimated 30,000 qualified applicants from entry to our universities for lack of government-funded places.

The UK already lags behind many other western countries in educational expenditure and access and it is interesting to note the emphasis placed on investment in education in newly dominant economies like China. We cannot

afford the economic and human cost of weakening our education system at precisely the moment when we need to strengthen it to meet the demands of the future.

The challenges we face in the UK, in post-school education no less than in other areas of public policy, are increasingly part of global phenomena and subject to policy development at the global or European level. The UK policy-making institutions must engage with these new policy forums and in particular must defend public and social provision from the depredations of inappropriate market philosophies which aim to asset-strip profitable provision and reduce public institutions to an impoverished second class system, in the name of 'competition' or 'choice'. The electorate must be enabled to see these fraudulent claims for what they are.

In this manifesto we set out a future vision for each of the educational sectors in which our members work and we call on all parliamentary candidates to support our campaign for its realisation.

An alternative vision for the future of education and a fair, inclusive society—the main themes of this manifesto:

- **the removal of all financial barriers to access to education**
- **a high quality publicly funded education system, accessible to all**
- **lifelong learning as a reality, not just a slogan**
- **a properly remunerated, valued and respected teaching, research and learning support professional workforce**
- **institutional autonomy, academic freedom and democratic governance**
- **an end to privatisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation of education**
- **an education service founded on respect for equality and diversity, commitment to the promotion of social inclusion and active opposition to all forms of discrimination**
- **an education service that is able to develop in all students the level of critical thinking needed to play a full role within society.**

FURTHER EDUCATION

Over 3.5 million people attend FE colleges in the UK. FE colleges teach more 16-19 year olds than any other sector; 44% of university entrants come from the sector and the percentage of examinations passed has risen from 52% to 70% over the last five years. The range and level of courses taught are necessarily very wide, from vocational to humanities courses, from basic literacy and numeracy to degree level, matching the needs of the most socially and culturally diverse body of students in the education system.

In the past decade the number of vocational qualifications awarded in the UK has increased by 90%. In 1995-6, 354,000 NVQs and SVQs were awarded at levels 1-5. By 2006-7, that figure had risen to 673,000. In addition, in 2006-7 1.4 million vocationally related qualifications were awarded at levels 1-3.¹

Since the incorporation of colleges in 1993, FE has been subject to an ever-increasing succession of market-driven policies, enforcing competition between colleges, schools and the HE sector and also confusing the needs of employers with the needs of employment. This has created a debased view of education as limited to meeting the demands of employers.

UCU believes these market-driven policies have undermined and disrupted the economic, as well as the cultural and social purposes of FE, squandering the proud history of FE staff's professional commitment to diverse and often deeply disadvantaged communities.

The impact on staff of the fragmentation and destabilisation of the FE system has been seen in poor pay and conditions. The undermining of national binding collective bargaining has been a major factor in this. A return to a proper, effective system of national industrial relations in FE is crucial if we are to create the professional levels of pay and conditions which will attract and retain the high quality staff needed in this highly challenging sector.

Not surprisingly, these changes, together with excessive workloads and administrative demands, have created a high degree of occupational stress for those who work in FE. In 2008 UCU conducted a major survey of stress experienced by its members. Members in FE consistently reported lower well-being than the average for the target group (which included the education sector) in the Health and Safety Executive's survey Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain in 2008. The biggest 'well-being gap' to the detriment of FE members was in the area of change, followed by demands, then role and managerial support.²

Between 2005-6 and 2006-7 there was a fall of more than 800,000 part-time

Alan Johnson, home secretary:

"I am passionate in my belief that FE should stand at the pinnacle of our education system: matching shifting economic challenges with reducing social inequalities; identifying, fulfilling, and then exceeding our aspirations; helping all of us to progress from what we are perceived to be, to what we want to be."

7 June 2006, when secretary of state for education and skills

learners in further education in England, following funding cuts and fee increases.³ This is a matter of great concern.

UCU believes that these market-driven policies must be examined critically to assess their educational worth. A useful starting point is to ask the question: What are the understandings, knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions and capacities which, in different degrees, should characterise an educated young adult in today's Britain?

For UCU, the aims of education go far beyond the centralised and marketised regime of targets, performance indicators and assessments that dominate current policy and practice. Our answer is that we need a broad, inclusive and comprehensive curriculum that enables an educated young person to have:

- a sufficient grasp of ideas, principles and levels of intellectual development to manage life intelligently
- a growing understanding of the integration of theory and practice in intelligent doing and making
- the competence and skills to tackle practical tasks, including those needed for employment in specific occupations
- an understanding of community and the disposition to make a contribution to it
- a sense of fairness about and responsibility to others
- the self knowledge and confidence to turn inspiration by others into aspiration for oneself.

The UK continues to lag behind comparator countries in the rates of young people staying on in full-time education and training beyond age 16 (see table on opposite page). As the Milburn report on fair access to the professions pointed out attainment at age 16 is a key determinant of people's life chances. Only about 34% of children from the lower socio-economic groups get five GCSEs at A-C grades, compared to about 65% from the highest socio-economic groups. For those eligible for free school meals that figure falls to 22%. This attainment gap must be closed if we are to create a fair society and increase participation levels post-16.⁴ One important element in achieving this is for the government to increase substantially both the value of Education Maintenance Allowances and their availability to young people.

We do not believe that compulsion is the answer. We believe that forcing young people to stay on in education will undermine the ethos of FE. It will not create a new generation of people who will become more educated and better prepared for whatever life throws at them. Young people need to be encouraged and inspired to learn, they cannot be coerced. Any attempts to force education upon teenagers or adults will be in danger of deepening their sense of alienation.

Percentage of the youth population in education (2007)

	Age group	% in education
Poland	15-19	95.9
Luxembourg	15-19	94.3
Czech Republic	15-19	92.7
Hungary	15-19	92.3
Germany	15-19	92.2
Finland	15-19	92.2
Belgium	15-19	91.9
France	15-19	91.1
Slovak Republic	15-19	90.2
Netherlands	15-19	88.1
Sweden	15-19	86.9
Greece	15-19	86.7
Austria	15-19	85.6
United States	15-19	85.2
Denmark	15-19	84.8
Switzerland	15-19	84.4
OECD average	15-19	84.3
Iceland	15-19	83.8
Italy	15-19	83.5
Ireland	15-19	82.6
Norway	15-19	80.6
Portugal	15-19	80.4
Canada	15-19	80.2
Australia	15-19	79.6
Spain	15-19	77.8
United Kingdom	15-19	76.2
New Zealand	15-19	73.1
Japan	15-24	58.4
Turkey	15-19	44.6
Mexico	15-29	33.7

Source Education at a Glance 2009: OECD Indicators; Table C3.2a. Percentage of the youth population in education 2007
www.oecd.org/document/24/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_43586328_1_1_1_37455,00.html

Our next question is: How should FE be funded and planned in order to provide coherent, relevant learning experiences to enable all its students to become educated citizens?

These are the policies that will best fulfil our vision for the future of FE:

Funding

- Return all national FE funding back to the democratic control of local authorities and regional bodies.
- Re-establish national binding collective bargaining on pay and conditions.
- Eradicate excessive staff workloads, including unnecessary administrative and bureaucratic demands.
- Increase like-for-like funding per FE student to match that in schools.
- Replace stop-start funding with clear funding commitments for a minimum of three-year periods (the normal comprehensive spending review period).
- Abolish the funding distinction between formal and non-formal adult learning, recognising the equal value to individuals and society of lifelong learning whether vocational or non-vocational.
- A staged expansion of entitlements beginning with an entitlement to a first course of study leading to a level 3 qualification for all adults up to age 30, followed by the widening of this entitlement to all adults.
- Sufficient learner support funds for both young people and adults, so that additional costs of learning such as materials, clothing, travel and examination fees are not a barrier to learning.
- The right to free education for asylum seekers.
- Staged abolition of ESOL fees starting with no ESOL fees up to level 1.
- Abolition of the rule that spouses of those without English as a first language have to wait a year after entry before being able to enrol on ESOL programmes; and of the rule that other family members have to wait three years before enrolling.
- The targeting of funding on groups currently under-represented in FE.
- A return to student fee remission at 75%, with a first step of fee-free courses up to Level 3.
- Provision of proper, well-funded local information, guidance and advice services offering impartial and independent advice to all young people. Such services should in the first instance be linked to the new adult advancement and careers service, with the ultimate aim of creating one IAG service for all.
- The recommendations of the Commission for Black Staff in FE and the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning should be fully implemented.

Workplace learning

- UCU believes that training for employees cannot be left to voluntary arrangements, so employees should have a statutory right to paid educational leave through an expanded Union Learning Representative system.

- There should be a statutory right to five days per year of paid education leave for every employee; such leave should be able to be accumulated and 'banked' so that it may be taken up in larger blocks of learning.
- Workplace learning should be supported through fiscal measures such as tax credits.
- Wider learning experiences should always be an integral part of a vocational curriculum; students need to learn about their rights, the role of trade unions, citizenship, discrimination, participating in democracy and environmental issues.

Planning: colleges for the community

Colleges need to collaborate strongly across all education sectors within a strategic plan that meets the needs of the whole community. Fee increases and the narrowing of the curriculum have compromised colleges' responsiveness to those who live and work in a local community. Re-engagement and refreshment of this essential relation should be promoted through:

- The return of the FE and adult sectors to local/regional authority control, within the oversight of the same government department.
- Local authority-wide cross-sector education forums should be established with representatives from local trade unions, parent groups, students' unions, community leaders and employers. Forums would map the education and training needs of the community and develop cross-sectoral education plans to monitor and evaluate learners' education, employment and progression outcomes. There is also a case for similar forums at regional level, particularly to cover further and adult skills provision. In addition, a national forum to plan strategic priorities would also be a valuable way of creating a consensus among key stakeholders and ensuring consistent implementation at regional and local levels.
- Regular feedback to colleges through the local authority-wide forums.
- Restoration of representative governance in FE college corporations through a stakeholding principle to include local authority, student, staff, community and employer governors.
- Performance benchmarks and standards should be a mix of national, regional and local elements reflecting the contexts and circumstances of the provider; such measures should grow organically from the institution's work and context; they should be clear, simple and understandable and entail a minimum of bureaucracy.
- Sector Skills Councils should be constituted with employer and trade union representation; they should be sufficiently resourced and have the necessary powers to effect change within their sectors in relation to vocational and workplace learning; Sector Skills Councils should have the power to raise levies for training across their sectors.

Staff professionalism

Lecturers in the FE sector have a proud history of teaching and preparing young adults for employment as well as for a wide range of academic progression. UCU believes that the creation of a broad and inclusive curriculum for all 14-19 year olds implies acknowledgement of the central importance of the lecturer as a creator as well as a deliverer of the curriculum.

Lecturing staff need the professional autonomy to create additional, coherent and relevant learning experiences, particularly with often reluctant and disadvantaged learners at Entry and Level 1. This will need:

David Willetts, shadow secretary of state for innovation, universities and skills:

“People do not become lecturers or teachers because they want to help maintain the national stock of human capital; they wish to pass on a love of their subjects. Equally, students will not engage with subjects out of a desire to improve the trend rate of growth. It is only by making sure that tutors are allowed to teach their subjects and students are allowed to be inspired that we can achieve these goals. The route to creating a well-educated workforce is a good student experience.”

31 October 2007

- strategies to rebuild the professional standing of teachers in the sector
- equality of status and transferability between qualified teacher status in schools and qualified teacher status in the FE sector
- an end to the creeping casualisation and de-professionalising of the FE workforce, including an end to the substitution of qualified teachers by instructors and assessors
- relevant and appropriate CPD as part of the normal workload of FE lecturers
- recognition of the dual professionalism of FE lecturers: both to their subject area and to their teaching
- a statutory right to paid educational leave and to workplace training committees; trade unions must be given negotiating rights for education and training
- negotiated peer observation, mentoring and professional training.

HIGHER EDUCATION

As the route to the professions and other highly skilled occupations, our universities are key determinants of people's life chances. As the main curators and transmitters of the accumulated knowledge and understanding of our society and the principal source of new insights and their practical application,

our universities are our intellectual lifeblood. Both functions are under threat as never before.

The government's recent policy statement, *Higher Ambitions*, effectively announces the end of publicly-funded expansion of UK higher education, paving the way for increased tuition fees and further selective funding of institutions.

Basic research, driven by intellectual curiosity, is to be the victim of a new funding system in which short-term 'impact' is favoured over academic quality; the broad intellectual mission of universities is to be sacrificed to narrow conceptions of 'employability' and business needs; and students are to be reduced to 'consumers' or 'customers'.

David Lammy, minister of state for higher education and intellectual property:

"I firmly believe that our university system and the values that it stands for must remain one of the forces that brings our society together and keeps it together. It has shown itself time and again one of the most powerful forces for social and economic progress that we have." 10 September 2009

UCU utterly rejects this impoverished, intellectually barren view of the future of our higher education system.

UCU stands for a system of higher education which is accessible to all; which encourages critical thinking in its students and full active engagement

in their learning; in which good research is funded wherever it is found; and in which the value of the contribution of all institutions is recognised, whether their main focus is on teaching or on research.

We have seen in recent years how badly thought out policies like the RAE and the removal of funding for equivalent and lower qualifications (ELQs) have led to the destruction of high quality provision and the demoralisation of talented staff.

We set out below our policies for preserving both the quality of our universities and their openness—

as the famous Robbins principle says—to all those able to benefit from higher education and who wish to do so.

Gordon Brown, prime minister:

"With China and India turning out not just 4 million graduates a year to Britain's 400,000, but also more computer scientists, more engineers, and more technicians, we can no longer afford to write off the talent or waste the potential of any young person."

2006 Budget speech, when chancellor of the exchequer

Lord Mandelson, secretary of state for business, innovation and skills:

"Our universities have been the source of a huge amount of the progressive and critical thinking on government, education, social welfare and economics that has shaped twentieth century society"

27 July 2009

Fees and funding

There is a consensus that teaching in HE is currently under-funded. While the government has been prepared to make some additional investment in research this has not been the case for teaching. The funding gap impacts particularly on institutions with large numbers of less academically prepared students, and students studying part-time, where teaching costs

will be high. However, throughout the sector UCU members have to deal with much larger class sizes, have less time to spend with students and are increasingly employed on short-term, casual contracts.

Staff:student ratios over the past two decades have worsened significantly, roughly doubling across the higher education sector as growth in staff numbers

Lord Mandelson, secretary of state for business, innovation and skills:

“I do not believe that the function of a university is limited to—or even primarily about—economic outcomes. They are not factories for producing workers...The case for a higher education system that invests in everything from classics to quantum physics is a compelling one. I say this not just because the utility in knowledge is often impossible to predict. It is because knowledge is an end in itself. Because historical awareness and critical thinking are part of the inventory of a rounded human being.” 27 July 2009

has failed to keep pace with the massive increases in student numbers, with serious implications for the quality of the student experience, as well as for the workloads and stress levels of staff.

Recent studies by UCU of occupational stress in HE have consistently shown workloads of 50 plus hours a week for full-time academic staff. In our 2008 survey of occupational stress in HE, we found levels of stress—measured by the HSE’s management standards indicator questionnaire—for academic and academic-related staff which were consistently higher than for the HSE’s target group of employees, including in education, in all but one of the stressors analysed.⁵

Serious public investment in the HE teaching base is required. In particular, we advocate:

- increasing the proportion of UK public expenditure on higher education to the OECD average; in 2006, the most recent year for which data were available at the time of writing, UK public spending on HE was 0.9% of GDP, compared with the OECD average of 1.0% (see table on opposite page)—increasing public spending by 0.1% of UK GDP would add £1.4 billion a year to the sector’s income at 2009-10 prices⁶
- transforming the career structure for fixed term staff, including the conversion of hourly paid teaching posts to fractional contracts
- improved recognition of good teaching in the HE promotions and rewards system.

UCU strongly opposed the introduction of tuition fees. We believe that they are a barrier to access to higher education for thousands of students, particularly those from poorer backgrounds. We are calling on all parliamentary candidates in the next general election to join us in support for the abolition of tuition fees and for the restoration of an effective system of maintenance grants for all students according to their needs.

**Public expenditure on higher education institutions
as % of GDP 1998-2006**

	<i>France</i> %	<i>Germany</i> %	<i>Japan</i> %	<i>UK</i> %	<i>USA</i> %	<i>OECD</i> <i>average %</i>
1998	1.01	0.97	0.43	0.83	1.07	1.06
1999	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.0
2000	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.0
2001	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.0
2002	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.8	1.2	1.1
2003	1.1	1.0	0.5	0.8	1.2	1.1
2004	1.2	1.0	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.0
2005	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.1
2006	1.1	0.9	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.0

Includes private expenditure on institutions subsidised by public funds.

Source OECD, Education at a Glance (series), table B2.4 (Data for earlier years was not in a directly comparable series)

In addition, UCU believes the current funding of students to be inequitable and regressive, and that it continues to have a deterrent effect on the participation in HE of some historically under-represented groups. Our recent research shows that where you live in Britain still determines your chances of educational success and that people living in traditionally underachieving areas are proportionately less likely to have a degree now than they were at the last election⁷. We recommend that:

- the costs of offering financial support to poorer students are shared by the sector as a whole, via the introduction of a national bursary system
- there is a restoration of proper maintenance grants to prevent a ‘two-tier’ student experience
- all part-time students should be given pro-rata access to the full range of grants and bursaries and the ability to defer paying fees
- there is a review of the use of widening participation funding—which totalled £2.5 billion in England in 2005-10—to identify best practice in widening participation activities and to set priorities in the use of funding between widening access, improving retention and other activities
- the review of widening participation includes fees and student support arrangements in postgraduate education
- properly funded initiatives should be put in place to achieve the Bologna objective of 20% of students having the opportunity to experience a significant study period in another country by 2020
- more generally, the full potential impact of the Bologna Process for UK

national structures and institutions, students and staff should be realised, including for mobility, quality assurance and the standing of UK higher education in Europe and in the global academic community.

Funding for widening participation in England, 2005-2010

	DIUS access funds*	HEFCE recurrent funding for WP**	Aim- higher ***	Total	Breakdown of HEFCE recurrent funding for WP:	
					HEFCE- widening access	HEFCE- improving retention
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
2005-6	72	277	122.2	471.2	62	215
2006-7	64	344	85	493.0	104	236.6
2007-8	52	354	82.2	488.2	106.2	242.8
2008-9	50	364	80	494.0	108.3	243.6
2009-10	45	407	80	532.0	141	266
Total	188	1339	449	2478.4	380.5	938.0

* **DIUS** Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, now part of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; as indicated in DIUS annual report 2009 table 11, and annual reports for preceding years

** **HEFCE** Higher Education Funding Council for England; annual HEFCE circulars on grant allocations: this is split between widening access and improving retention, retermed 'Widening participation' and 'Teaching enhancement and student success' from 2009-10

*** Excellence Challenge and Partnerships for Progression before 2004: HEFCE 2002/49; 2004/08; 2006/02; 2008/05. The £80m figure for 2008-9 is based on one-third of £239.5m Aimhigher funding in 2008-11 (HEFCE 2008/05 para 9).

Academic freedom

One of the central purposes of HE is to serve the public interest through extending knowledge and understanding and fostering critical thinking and expression in staff and students, and in society more widely. Academic freedom is essential to achieving these ends and therefore to the development of a civilised democracy. Academic freedom means the ability to conduct research, teach, speak, and publish without interference or penalty.

In recent years, government, through targeted funding and other means, has intervened to set research priorities and to favour some forms of research over others. The latest proposals for linking research funding to its 'impact' are just the latest in a series of policies which have restricted the ability of researchers to determine the subject and focus of their own research, with serious consequences for their academic freedom. In some cases, there has been a deeply disturbing trend of supporting the orthodox over the more critical and challenging forms of enquiry.

In addition, in recent years, academic freedom has been undermined by the use of fixed-term contracts and the intense pressures on staff to attract students and research funding. More recently, government proposals on anti-terrorism and extremism on campus have clashed with the values of academic freedom.

Use of fixed-term contracts for UK academic staff

Academic employment function 2007-8	Open-ended/ permanent contract	Fixed-term contract	Total
Teaching only	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%
Research only	24.5%	75.5%	100.0%
Teaching and research	89.0%	11.0%	100.0%
Total	64.2%	35.8%	100.0%

Source HESA Staff Record 2007/08; % calculations UCU

We recommend that:

- legal protection of academic freedom be extended to cover staff in all universities and colleges across the UK, building on the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of University Teaching Personnel
- academic freedom is conceived not just as a defence of the right to express controversial or unpopular opinions, but also positively as the freedom of academic and related staff to pursue their own lines of research, rather than being constrained by the funding or ideological agendas of government or business
- alleged breaches of academic freedom should be investigated and adjudicated by a body similar to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for students.

Governance and accountability

We believe that academic freedom requires the development of open, democratic and collegial forms of institutional governance, including access to proper whistleblowing procedures. Collegial decision-making should encompass decisions regarding curricula, research, administration, outreach and community work, the allocation of resources and other related activities. Unfortunately, the trend over the last fifteen years or so has been towards smaller councils and governing bodies, with diminished staff and student representation, as well as the weakening of academic governing structures such as Senates and Academic Boards.

We recommend that:

- there should be an independent, public review of the composition and appointment of university councils and governing bodies.

Research and development

An essential role of universities is to advance, create and disseminate knowledge through research. UCU remains committed to the development of a research funding system based on the following key principles:

- opportunities for all academics to engage in research and scholarship
- the employment of staff on proper permanent contracts

- the continuation of the ‘dual support’ system
- peer review assessment of research quality
- reduced levels of selectivity, particularly in arts, humanities and social sciences

**Drew Gilpin Faust,
president of Harvard University:**

“Higher education is not about results in the next quarter but about discoveries that may take—and last—decades or even centuries. Neither the abiding questions of humanistic inquiry nor the winding path of scientific research that leads ultimately to innovation and discovery can be neatly fitted within a predictable budget and timetable.”

1 September 2009

- the importance of recognising and rewarding the dissemination of research through teaching.

Unfortunately, over the last two decades an increasingly mechanistic use of research selectivity ratings has led to an over-concentration of research resources and to the discouragement of innovation.

Mechanisms such as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) have also weakened the productive link between teaching and research. We believe

that the time is right for a wide-ranging, independent review of UK research funding and assessment.

ADULT LEARNING

Adult learning has had an increasingly high profile over the last thirty years. Governments of every persuasion have called for the creation of the learning society and changes to national culture so that lifelong learning is valued just

as much as initial education. This high profile is also because of more fundamental trends in the UK and indeed in all countries with developed economies.

We deal separately with adult education in this section of the manifesto, while recognising, of course, that it is an integral part of the work of both further and higher education institutions.

The UK is an ageing society. Its population is living longer and the number of young people is falling.

70% of the workforce of 2020 is already at work. Our ageing population and potentially declining workforce impact not just on work and employment, but also on society and the family.

Adult learning can no longer be an afterthought in the education system, as it has been in the past. Increasingly it will be seen as one of the means by which the state, employers and individuals address problems and issues raised by a changing and ageing population.

Technological change, along with globalisation, is transforming all aspects of peoples' lives: communications, work, education and learning; as well as also changing personal and family communications and interaction. The pace of technological change and innovation has also speeded up. Both technological change and globalisation change adult learning: insecurity of employment for many means there is a constant pressure for re- and up-skilling throughout people's lives.

UK is a society that is constructed along profound divisions of wealth, class, gender, race and ethnicity, age and perceived mental and physical abilities. The UK is going through a period of profound widespread social change. There is an increasing diversity and fragmentation of experiences and institutions, of changing identities, loyalties and aspirations. Many feel themselves excluded from mainstream life and culture. Social and community divisions become sharper and more intractable. Adult learning is increasingly seen as a valuable tool in the furtherance of policies aimed at developing social inclusion and cohesion.

Despite these trends, the UK still has among the lowest rates of participation beyond the age of 17 of all developed economies. Seven million adults lack functional literacy skills, 14 million lack functional numeracy skills. In 2008, 12% of the male and 13% of the female working age population in the UK had

Lord Mandelson, secretary of state for business, innovation and skills:
“We need to be serious about adult skills and life-long higher and further education...First, almost half of British university students are already mature students. Second, most of the future British workforce of the 2020s is already in their twenties or older...”

27 July 2009

no qualifications; in addition, 17% of the male and 18% of the female working age population in the UK had qualifications below NVQ level 2.⁸

But the UK relies on the voluntary efforts of employers in skills generation. The government now argues that adult learning across all education sectors can only be supported with public funds if it impacts on both the stock of skills and raises the levels of those skills. The effect has been to reduce adult learning to what it is perceived that employers want from it.

The numbers of adults learning in the Learning and Skills Sector has fallen by over 1.5 million in the last two years, with a fall of more than 800,000 part-time learners in further education in England between 2005-6 and 2006-7. These losses have not just been in programmes that do not lead to qualifications, non-vocational adult learning, but also in programmes in areas such as IT and health and social care that can lead to employment.

Fees for certain provision such as ESOL have been imposed, and government support for the cost of many FE programmes has been cut to the point that by next year, students face paying 50% of the costs of their learning. In higher education the government withdrew completely the funding for graduates taking equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQs) than they already possessed. This has led to many universities cutting their offer to adults, and even the closure of whole departments.

We have also seen the widespread withdrawal of concessionary fees for learners over 65 years of age, which has had a major impact on the quality of life and social contribution of many older people in our community.

These policies have continued through the recession, when cutting back on adult learning seems especially perverse. Unemployed adults whose numbers are rising at an alarming rate need programmes through which they can re- and up-skill themselves. There is also an urgent need for other kinds of learning courses which can help the unemployed to remain engaged in learning and can help sustain their self-confidence.

A way forward

UCU has developed an alternative vision for adult learning. Our alternative is based around some key principles that underpin our proposals for reshaping all adult learning to meet the challenges of the 21st century:

- affordable, high quality learning of the highest quality as it is needed, by whom it is needed, when it is needed in whatever mode or setting
- adult learning to be seen as an irreducible characteristic of life, work and culture in the 21st century, hence a public service and funded as such
- adult learning to be seen as essential to economic, social and civic regeneration, even more so when we begin to emerge from the current recession

- adult learning to be based around a negotiated, comprehensive liberating curriculum delivered by a professional high quality adult workforce alive to the diverse economic and social benefits of lifelong learning
- adult learning is a continuum of provision from the most basic and informal learning to the most formal, advanced and specialised; there should be no artificial barriers between the different parts of adult learning, and progression to higher and deeper learning
- adult learning has benefited from and continues to need professional and committed practitioners to deliver and manage it
- adult learning is the active transmission of knowledge and skills
- adult learning has equality and diversity and equal opportunities at its core
- adult learning harnesses new technology to meet the needs of adults and to empower them in a globalised world
- adult learning to be based in institutions and services which have systems of governance that are truly accountable and which empower learners, practitioners and their communities, including employers

These principles lead UCU to make a series of practical proposals that would lead to the creation of a system of adult learning that would make a significant difference to individuals and the nation:

Governance and accountability

- All adult learning and education requires systems of governance that are truly accountable and empower learners, practitioners and their communities, including employers and employment interests; accountability must flow upwards to democratically elected bodies.
- Where an institution has a specialist sectoral role it should also be accountable in some way to an industry body which itself would be properly representative of employment interests, the employees as well as the employers.
- Where institutions have national roles, the proper form of accountability should be to parliament, but a parliament that has real powers of scrutiny, interrogation, investigation and decision.
- Any national agencies which are required must be accountable to democratic bodies; in their own governance they should also be representative of the sector that they work in and through.
- In non-formal and further education, there must be a reduction in the growth of 'quangocracy'; quangos must be kept to a minimum, and to those areas of activity where independent scrutiny, analysis, investigation are required; they must be transparent and accountable and involve practitioners and their elected representatives in their work.
- Academic freedom and autonomy for staff are essential components of true accountability; it is essential that staff are allowed to explore knowledge and ideas freely and openly without interference and censorship.

- Non-formal and some aspects of self-organised informal adult learning should be connected to systems of local governance and accountability; non-formal adult learning providers should have governing bodies on which communities, staff and learners are represented.
- Informal adult learning opportunities should be fostered and supported so as to provide at local level an opportunity for self-organised groups to be supported and connected to more formal situations.
- Informal and non-formal adult learning should be supported by the creation of new local partnerships. They should be open and transparent and have real resources to support providers and learning opportunities as well as real community, staff and learner involvement.
- A National Plan for adult learning should be created for adult learning defining potential and actual needs, available and potential resources and strategies to achieve its fulfilment; such a plan should have regional and local implementations.

Funding

- The percentage of gross domestic product devoted to further and non-formal adult learning, at 0.6% of UK GDP in 2008-9, should be increased to at least 1% of GDP; in HE public spending should be increased to at least 1% of GDP, in line with the OECD average.
- Fee income targets for colleges should be abolished.
- Financial support for all adult students in further and higher education should include support for maintenance costs for the student and any dependents, costs of books and materials, any required equipment and clothing, costs of caring responsibilities and any travel to study costs.
- Learner Support Funds in further and adult education providers should be increased so that they are capable of supporting all legitimate student needs; any loans made must carry low or no interest and be repaid within reasonable and appropriate time frames.
- There should be generous and accessible national fee remission policies for non-formal adult learning, including for older learners.
- Funding across all adult learning must be adequate to sustain the infrastructure needed to ensure high quality learning and teaching, including required new building, plant, equipment and appropriate technology, and well-equipped and stocked libraries, and resource facilities.
- Funding across all adult learning must be sufficient to support properly all those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities needs.
- Funding methodologies across adult learning must as far as possible be simple, clear and understandable; they should be mode and level free—that is, not favour a particular mode of delivery or level of qualification, achievement and attainment, but properly and fully fund all modes and levels.

- Quality**
- All standards and benchmarks used either nationally, sectorally or at institutional level must be subject to regular review and modification in the light of experience on the ground; such processes should include all stakeholders including staff and students.
 - National agencies used for national and sector external inspection and quality assurance should also offer guidance and support for improvement.
 - Peer evaluations and process that seek to utilise the knowledge and skills of fellow practitioners in improving quality should be encouraged, resourced properly and seen and recognised as legitimate.
- Curriculum**
- The adult learning curriculum is made up of a spectrum of episodes, opportunities, access points, programmes, courses and classes ranging from the most loose and informal to the highly disciplined and structured; all should be recognised and valued—they complement, enhance and enrich one another.
 - Adult learning must be supported by clear, understandable, up-to-date information, advice and guidance both from an impartial and independent service and as an integral part of the actual processes of teaching and learning.
 - Qualifications for adult learning must be fit for purpose; where possible adult learning programmes should be modularised and unitised and integrated with a system of credit accumulation and transfer.
 - The adult learning curriculum should include programmes that can be undertaken for their own sake, not necessarily leading to qualifications.
- Widening participation**
- Adult learning must be based around an entitlement and curriculum offer for adults, including access to guidance, learner and learning support.
 - Institutional funding and student funding arrangements should be adjusted so that part-time study is not disadvantaged.
 - Adult learning should be supported by funded outreach work to those individuals and groups who have been and are disadvantaged in terms of educational opportunities.
- Role of the practitioner**
- The role of the practitioner in stimulating innovation in adult learning should be recognised and valued.
 - The dual professionalism of adult learning practitioners as both subject specialists and as teachers and researchers should be recognised and valued.
 - This professionalism should be underpinned by properly resourced initial training and subsequent continuing professional development, with time within workloads to undertake such activities; there should be entitlement for all adult learning staff to initial training and CPD.

- Salaries for adult learning practitioners should be such as to recruit and retain the best possible staff.
- Although there may be particular circumstances when part-time hourly paid and fixed term adult learning staff are used, as far as possible all adult learning staff should be employed on full or fractional contracts.

PRISON EDUCATION

Prison education is undertaken by UCU members working inside prisons on education programmes for the inmates. Prison education has increasingly been recognised as being a key factor in reducing reoffending.

Large percentages of prisoners lack literacy and numeracy skills. One quarter of young offenders are reported to have reading skills below those of the average seven-year-old. 48% of prisoners have a reading level at or below Level 1, while an even greater proportion (65%) have a numeracy level at or below Level 1; 52% of male prisoners and 71% of female prisoners have no qualifications at all.¹⁰

Alongside problems of substance abuse and mental illness many prisoners have had disrupted lives including education.

There is evidence of a reduction in re-offending by prisoners who complete education courses, compared with those who either did not undertake, or did not complete, the course.¹¹ While we would not wish to over-simplify the connection between educational intervention and subsequent reduction in re-offending, there are indications that investment in the education of prisoners brings a considerable cost-benefit. It has been estimated that the financial returns from prison education results in a 25% reduction in the £12 billion total cost of offending by ex-prisoners in the first year.¹²

Despite improvements in the position of prison education over the last decade, when it became a shared responsibility between the Home Office and the Education Department, prison education remains neglected and under resourced given the challenges it faces. It goes through periodic competitive tendering which usually results in unnecessary disruption of education programmes. The tendering of prison education results in education contracts being held by providers who may be hundreds of miles away from the prisons for which they are responsible. Prison education often suffers from low status within prisons and within the wider work of the providers themselves.

Not surprisingly, these changes and other aspects of working in prisons have helped create a high degree of occupational stress for those who work there. In 2008 UCU conducted a major survey of occupational stress experienced by its members. Members in prison education consistently reported lower well-being than the average for the target group (which included the education sector) in the Health and Safety Executive's survey Psychosocial Working Conditions in Britain in 2008. Their well-being was also consistently lower than measured among UCU members working in further and higher education. The biggest 'wellbeing gap' to the detriment of prison education members was in the area of change, followed by managerial support, then relationships and understanding of role. Comments from members who are teachers in prison

Guardian columnist and former prisoner Erwin James:

“Education in prison is the last bastion of rehabilitation. It is the only area in a prison where the prisoner is seen as a student, a learner and an individual with specific needs first—and an offender second.” *Guardian blog, 16 September 2009*

education, about the factors which make a significant contribution to their stress and frustration, included:

- *'I particularly feel that over the years what we do has been devalued and has deteriorated from a hugely rewarding profession into a mindboggling morass of bureaucracy and meaningless paperwork..'*
- *'Working in a prison is a stressful responsibility in itself. I do not feel that we receive sufficient training to deal with difficult students at the beginning of our life 'inside' and that when problems arise there is not always enough support to back us up or to remedy the problem. The paperwork is increasing weekly.'*
- *'I have witnessed much bullying over many years, and feel I have been subjected to this, and particularly harassment in terms of the creation of a hostile working environment. I have suffered and witnessed discrimination mostly in the way teaching hours are given and removed at the manager's will. Discrimination is mostly not on the basis of race or the other (illegal) criteria, but on the basis of the manager's personal likes and dislikes and political agenda.'*

UCU calls for:

- The ending of retendering of prison education contracts; prison education should be delivered by the public sector education providers in the locality of the prison.
- Delivery of prison education should remain with the local provider unless the quality of the provision is demonstrated to be unacceptable.
- Prison education lecturers should have the same basic pay and conditions as the lecturers in the provider's mainstream provision.
- There should be consideration of the payment to prison education staff of supplements to take account of the difficulties of where and how they are delivering learning programmes.
- Prison education staff should have access to mainstream staff development opportunities as well as opportunities to address the particular situations of prison education.
- Prisoners should have access to a comprehensive curriculum; basic skills should be delivered through separate programmes and embedded across the curriculum.
- The funding of prison education should be sufficient to deliver a comprehensive curriculum and all necessary support as well as properly reward prison education staff; there should also be sufficient funding to keep pace with the ever rising numbers of prisoners.
- Pay for prisoners for attending prison education programmes should be at the same level as other paid prison activities.

- Premises for prison education should be appropriate for the delivery of learning programmes.
- Prison libraries should have sufficient resources to support all the needs of prisoners including supporting learning programmes; prison libraries should be linked to library services in their locality.
- Prison education programmes should be linked to other learning prison programmes such as anger management, substance abuse programmes, addressing offending programmes.
- Prisoners should have controlled access to the internet for educational purposes.

APPENDIX:
MANIFESTOS
FOR WALES,
SCOTLAND &
NORTHERN
IRELAND

Introduction

The Wales University and College Union Cymru (Wales UCU Cymru) is the largest and leading trade union representing members in further education, higher education and the lifelong learning sectors in Wales. Our vision is for excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, the promotion of social justice through access for all to good-quality education, truly democratic governance within institutions and to placing a commitment to equality at the heart of our education system. We believe in the liberation of potential through education and in social partnership as the building block on which to build future policy.

More than a decade on from the creation of the National Assembly for Wales we can look back on some real progress in post-sixteen education in Wales. As a trade union Wales UCU Cymru recognises this progress and the value that has been placed on the contribution and views of the trade union movement.

But new thinking is now needed. The collapse of the global financial markets and its effect on public service finances and on the communities we all serve, means that a new approach is required. Radical change must happen if Wales to come out of the global recession stronger and if the mistakes of previous governments are not to be repeated.

Our manifesto is underpinned by very clear principles.

First, that education must have a value in its own right. Its role in creating wealth, especially in this recession is vital but that must not be its sole purpose. At its very best education is a liberator of minds, the provider of life-chances and pioneer of new ideas and new knowledge. Second, improvements to the Welsh public service, of which both further and higher education must be recognised as part, must be built on a genuine commitment to social partnership. Without that partnership the improvements to which we are all committed cannot be delivered. And finally, this manifesto is underpinned by a commitment to quality. A new definition is needed which reaches beyond statistics on a spreadsheet to a wider recognition of the personal and collective advancement that education brings, the practical, everyday experiences of both learners and staff, and the immense contribution it can bring to the fight for social justice, social cohesion and ending child poverty.

This manifesto sets out a vision of placing social partnership at the heart of education policy, underpinning excellence in HE through collaboration, and ending the internal market in FE by ending incorporation.

Our manifesto seeks to build on the Assembly Government's record since devolution by offering a radical and practical vision for the future. The old ways will not stand the test of the challenges ahead. Change is needed at every level of our sector if it is to help deliver the agenda of both the current Assembly Government and the one to follow in 2011.

Higher education pledges

- **Understanding the core mission of universities** Understanding, respecting and supporting the core mission of our university sector must be a priority for the One Wales government and the one to follow it in 2011. This core mission must be more than just the economic imperative of the commercialisation of knowledge and research, important though this is in the context of the global economic downturn. The core mission is to add to knowledge and understanding and to enrich the quality of people's lives. In taking forward the higher education action plan in response to the Jones Review the Assembly Government must clearly recognise and value this core mission. To do so will help to underpin the wider policy objectives and expectations, such as the economic contribution that universities can and must make and the liberation of human potential through learning.
- **Collaborating to compete** Continued and greater collaboration between institutions is a prerequisite for an internationally competitive Welsh university sector. To achieve this, the Assembly Government and HEFCW must give a strong lead through both policy direction and the funding to make it happen. It will only be through collaboration that the sector as a whole can compete internationally. This must mean ensuring that every department has the scale and the capacity to draw on international research and learning and that across the sector we maintain a broad diversity of academic disciplines and provision. Without this diversity the sector will lack the collective and inter-disciplinary flexibility to relate to new developments. All political parties must commit to preserving and building upon the current diversity of provision in Welsh institutions. The sector cannot compete through an increasing and relentless specialisation or through targeting a niche market. We recognise that collaboration is essential to the international competitiveness and robust health of the sector and we will continue to support greater collaboration, and where appropriate institutional mergers, providing that there are no compulsory redundancies as a result.
- **A road map to closing the investment gap** All political parties must commit to closing the higher education investment gap in Wales. To ensure this is delivered a detailed road map should be produced, including timescales, to identify how and by when this will be achieved. Unless the gap is closed the sector will not be able to compete internationally nor provide the necessary knowledge and research to benefit the Welsh economy and society.
- **Driving the Welsh economy** Wales UCU Cymru recognises the central role of higher education in driving growth and the long-term success of the Welsh economy. Parties and institutions should commit to continued investment in third mission activities, institutional collaboration to deliver

the necessary scale and to a new approach to the commercialisation of knowledge and research. This new approach, through a tri-partite, co-operative ownership approach to intellectual property would help to firmly anchor the wealth from ideas in the Welsh economy and in local communities. In contributing to the third mission activities of higher education, collectively the sector, funding council and political parties must continue to commit to widening access, recognising the need for higher level skills to help reshape the Welsh economy, and the need to give greater support and opportunities for part-time learning.

■ **A new approach to governance** The failure of governance in global financial institutions has shaken public and political confidence in the previous assumptions about how large institutions should be run and held to account. Lessons must be learned for higher education and a new approach developed. One such lesson for higher education is that governance is enhanced by the presence of internal / staff members who are better placed to challenge management assumptions and decisions. Wales UCU Cymru calls on political parties to make a commitment to a new approach to governance in higher education. As a first step, work currently ongoing to reform the governance of post-92 institutions in Wales must include a requirement for elected representatives to represent academic staff, support staff and students at each institution. Following this work a full and comprehensive review of governance in the sector should be established. A key principle of this review should be to introduce a new balance on the governing bodies of universities comprised of one-third management, one-third independent, elected staff and student representatives and one-third community representatives.

Further education pledges

■ **Ending incorporation** Incorporation has not worked and the Assembly Government's review of governance in further education is the opportunity to put it right. It is the opportunity to end the years of the internal market in further education and to reintroduce genuine democratic accountability. The incorporated status of further education institutions should be ended and control for the sector should be transferred to the Assembly Government. This must not mean running every college, department and course from Cardiff Bay, but it should mean that there is accountability for the hundreds of millions of pounds of public investment spent each year by the sector. Wales UCU Cymru continues to support the transformation agenda and believes that ending incorporation is the next logical step to achieving a genuine 14–19 pathway where learners have real choice and local communities have the necessary diversity and range of provision.

■ **Establishing an all-Wales contract of employment** Further education is a national sector and across Wales lecturers are working to a national

standard and system of learning. Yet, unlike teachers in the maintained sector, there is no national, common contract for FE lecturers. The introduction of a common pay system pay and parity between FE lecturers and maintained teachers has helped to drive up the quality of teaching and standards of attainment for learners. The introduction of a common contract of employment, rather than the twenty different contracts currently in place would deliver a similar boost to standards and quality. Investing political commitment and resource into establishing an all-Wales contract of employment would be an investment in the quality of provision received by learners. Wales UCU Cymru asks all parties to commit to supporting negotiations between the trade unions in further education and the employers representative Fforwm, and publicly support the introduction of a national contract for further education.

■ **Investing in quality** Wales UCU Cymru welcomes the prominence and focus given to further education by all political parties during this Assembly term and we call for the commitments made in recent months to be honoured in forthcoming budget debates and in the 2011 Assembly Election campaign. While a fully funded FE sector must underpin Wales' economic recovery, all political parties must commit to funding education in its widest sense, including non-accredited teaching and learning. Education in its own right, and not just for skills and vocational training, must be recognised, funded and valued. The contribution that further education can make to helping to end child poverty and to deliver both social justice and social cohesion is unlimited—but only if the investment in quality is made by government.

■ **Transformation** Wales UCU Cymru continues to support the Assembly Government's transformation agenda as the basis for extending choice, raising quality and ending the market in further education. Moving forward, collaboration and, where appropriate, merger, must be based on sound educational grounds and meet the needs of local communities. Our continued support for this process will be conditional upon there being no compulsory redundancies to skilled staff as a result.

Cross-sector issues

■ **Social partnership** Wales has an opportunity to use the fallout from the global recession to build a new model of social partnership across the Welsh public service. All political parties should make a commitment to social partnership across the whole of the Welsh public service. This must include both further and higher education as sectors which receive hundreds of millions of pounds of public investment.

■ **Protecting adult community education** The squeeze on public service finances has seen an attack on adult community education through cuts by both universities and further education colleges. Wales UCU Cymru calls on all political parties to make explicit their commitment to adult

community education and to pledge to maintain funding for learners undertaking equivalent or lower qualifications. Adult community education is too often seen as the soft touch for cuts and savings. The next Assembly Government must commit to protecting the funding and the provision for adult community education, including for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). For thousands of people these courses are nothing less than a lifeline that represents a life-changing opportunity for fulfilment and advancement. The scale and breadth of the cuts demonstrate how far we have to go to truly value education in its own right.

- **Higher education in further education** Where higher education courses are delivered in further education institutions, guarantees must be given on the quality of teaching and research, resources for staff and students, time for scholarship and other contractual issues and funding. The expansion of higher education in further education must not be used to deliver higher education on the cheap.
- **Equality** Wales UCU Cymru welcomes the UK government's Equalities Bill as an important step forward in delivering a fairer, more equal Britain. However, the proposed legislation doesn't go far enough and we call on the Assembly to introduce tougher regulations for Wales once the legislation is passed and the appropriate powers devolved to the Assembly. In particular, Wales UCU Cymru calls on all political parties to support the introduction of mandatory equal pay audits and a statutory right for paid time off for equality representatives for both the public service and the private sector in Wales. These changes would allow the public service in Wales to give a strong lead to other parts of the UK and to other employers in Wales that the highest standards are to be expected and met. Wales should also lead the way with a renewed commitment and drive to addressing socio-economic inequality in access to further, higher and adult community education. For universities to be vehicles of social justice rather than perpetuate socioeconomic inequality, it is essential that HEIs in Wales be included in the list of bodies to which the Socioeconomic Duty will apply under the Single Equalities Bill. All institutions, as a condition of funding, must demonstrate their commitment and efforts towards the UK Government and Assembly Government commitment to ending child poverty by 2020.

SCOTLAND

Introduction The University and College Union Scotland represent nearly 7,000 academic and related staff in Scottish higher education institutions. As an autonomous part of the University and College Union, we are strong supporters of the Scottish Parliament.

Higher education provides the educated workforce that is the base for inward investment, the research for new companies, the professionals in our public services. It both reflects the need to preserve and sustain cultural achievement in Scotland, and contributes crucially to how culture is developed. Above all, it enriches the lives of those who experience it.

Knowledge for Scotland Universities provide the professionals working in every aspect of Scottish society including public services, manufacturing, research and development. They also provide independent experts and research in every field. In addition the universities are the gatekeepers for all the professions, providing the first line of assurance. By doing these things, Scotland's universities provide the knowledge for Scotland and the UK, and they make an essential contribution to the wider world.

Workforce According to the Scottish Executive about 80% of the Scottish working age population are educated to at least SVQ level 2. For low level qualifications Scotland ranks very highly in terms of international comparators with only 10% of the working age population having less than a standard grade and similarly for intermediate qualifications where 53% of the working age population have at least SVQ level 3, making Scotland fourth among 16 nations. However, for degree level qualifications, Scotland is in the second quartile of OECD nations and the number of graduates needed to reach the first quartile is 40 000. In terms of the UK position Scotland fares well with only the South East and London having a greater percentage of the population with degrees but Scotland is ranked first in the UK for the number of intermediate qualifications. Therefore, Scotland has a well qualified workforce but in terms of the OECD nations it does not yet have the highly skilled workforce.

If the knowledge economy is to be a reality, then Scotland must train and retain more graduates in the workforce.

Broadening participation in higher education Widening access is an objective we have supported for many years. The SFC has recently published a report into widening participation, *Learning for All*, which highlights the efforts and funding the SFC is making in the recruitment of under-represented groups.

Student finance We believe Scotland should stay top-up free and with levels of bursaries which benefit students from low household incomes. Many students will benefit financially from their studies and but repay that benefit through income, capital and expenditure taxes as well as the student loan. We

recognise and welcome that the graduate endowment and indeed fees from English students will only be used for student bursaries, but graduates contribute significantly to the public purse and in turn public funding and not private fees should be used to finance Scottish higher education.

UCU Scotland is opposed to the use of top-up fees or student quotas. Public funding is required to maintain the competitive position of our universities.

Part-time students The part-time student supplement was introduced to encourage wider access, as part-time study is considered to be more attractive to students from the lower socio-economic classes. However, part-time undergraduate students cannot access the same level of student support as full-time undergraduates and are often liable for fees, despite the fee waiver for students from low-income backgrounds.

We recommend that all students should be treated equally whether they are studying part or full time.

Commercialisation Spend on Scottish Business Enterprise Research and Development, BERD, is half of that for the UK as a whole and much less than most of its other competitor nations. Hence in Scotland there is a very low base of BERD which makes it difficult to build links between researchers based in universities and those in industry. This lessens the scope for research to be developed by existing business in Scotland resulting in a downward spiral unless there is a significant intervention to break the trend.

Scotland needs a national strategy for science and skills that addresses the issues of lack of BERD funding and skill shortages whilst encouraging the development of high technology and knowledge based industries. If Scotland is to emulate the economic prosperity and growth in those countries that have thriving knowledge economies then the level of funding in research and development has to increase.

UCU believes it will be impossible to grow a knowledge economy without a significant improvement in industrial research spending.

The SFC has now introduced a knowledge transfer and commercialisation funding stream which encourages knowledge transfer in its broadest sense and not just for direct economic gains. This is a welcome extension of research funding but it can only be further extended with the input of resources from Scottish Enterprise. The development of Scotland as a prosperous cultured nation in which citizens enjoy a good quality of life can only occur if research—and nationally relevant collaborations—are promoted in our universities.

The Intermediary Technology Institutes (ITIs) were envisaged as a conduit between university research and business development. In their first annual

report, the ITIs reported better than expected progress in membership and programme take up. The initial work seems to be producing results but it is too early to predict if this will add value and increase research and development in Scotland and this funding is also limited to energy, technological media and life sciences.

We recommend that Scottish Enterprise and the SFC use their funding and expertise in facilitating links between industry, research establishments and the researchers themselves.

Articulation- stepping stones to achievement Scotland is one of the first countries in Europe to develop formal articulation routes through the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework, SCQF, and is relatively successful in recruiting further education students into higher education with advanced standing. However, the SFC should do more to build and facilitate links on a national basis rather than leaving each institution to develop their own schemes.

In particular the easy transition from level to level on SCQF should be clarified for all HEIs, so that those students who wish to continue their studies are encouraged to find an appropriate course. However, such articulation routes will still only be used by a minority of students. We therefore remain committed to the distinctive nature of the four year Honours degree and the value of the HND as a qualification in its own right for the majority of students.

There should be increased articulation between further education and higher education with the encouragement of the funding councils, including the full implementation of the SCQF.

Staff the key resource The key activities of universities—teaching and research—are conducted by exceptionally highly qualified labour. For a typical university lecturer or researcher the personal investment involved is at least four years of undergraduate and three years of doctoral study followed often by years of research. All this constitutes an even longer apprenticeship than for doctors or lawyers. Higher education relies on all those who contribute to the university experience and relies too on its academic related staff and their expertise. All staff contributions should be acknowledged and recognised.

Management and governance Good people management should be seen as an objective in itself and not just as a mechanism for achieving objectives. University Courts and management must put good people management first, work in partnership with the unions and develop expertise in managing people, resources, and institutional change without conflict or crisis. Clear, transparent and democratic governance arrangements with both staff and student representation on University Courts is critical to achieve this, alongside placing equality and academic freedom at the heart of our education system.

Devolution The SFC works with the other UK funding bodies in providing

quality and research assessment systems but HEFCE, as the largest funding body, tends to dominate and lead the agenda. This includes those aspects of research funding that are not devolved issues and in particular the announcement of a replacement for the RAE by the UK treasury even though SFC research funding is a devolved issue. The SFC is often more enlightened in its approach but can be forced to follow the lead of HEFCE in some areas. A properly informed SFC engagement with the improvement of people management, with sensitivity to the fact and constraints of UK bargaining, would help to achieve a better balance. Universities Scotland, the SFC and the campus unions will need to work in partnership to ensure that Scotland's universities meet Scotland's distinctive needs.

We call for a broad enquiry into HE in Scotland which is not just about top-up fees but about the nature of universities in the 21st century, changes in the contribution made by the Scottish system to UK HE since the Robbins era, the desirability of more democratic governance, and the absolute necessity of academic freedom to a democratic society.

Conclusion

All the mainstream political parties have expressed their backing for Scotland's world class universities and have acknowledged their importance for the future of Scotland. However, their role will be diminished if the concerns expressed in this manifesto are not addressed. In particular, the issue of adequate funding is crucial, as increased funding benefits the rest of the UK.

If these issues are addressed, then higher education can contribute crucially to the way in which advances in knowledge serve the economy. It will help to ensure the health of civil society. It will play its part in creating the best possible conditions for human fulfilment in later life for its students.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Introduction

UCU is the largest post-school union in the world: a force working for education that employers and the government cannot ignore. It has 120,000 members worldwide—with over 4,000 members in Northern Ireland—across the higher education and further education sectors.

In Northern Ireland, UCU is a strong voice and a campaigning force, constantly working on behalf of members. As a professional organisation, UCU emphasis is on continued high quality further and higher education in Northern Ireland.

A well managed, appropriately rewarded and fairly treated workforce will ensure excellence.

In advance of the 2010 Westminster elections, UCU has devised a 'manifesto' for further, higher and adult education in Northern Ireland. Set in the context of fiscal challenges, recovery from recession, finite resources and pressures on public sector expenditure, UCU is aware of the need for measured realism in outlining a vision for further, higher and adult education and training in the post-2010 election era.

We believe in the liberation of potential through education and in social partnership as the building block on which to build future policy.

UCU Northern Ireland's manifesto is underpinned by clear principles:

- First, recognition and understanding of the vital role of education in creating wealth, especially in this time of recession. At its very best education is a liberator of minds, the provider of life-chances and pioneer of new ideas and new knowledge.
- Second, improvements to Northern Ireland's public service sector, of which both further and higher education must be recognised as part, need to be built on a genuine commitment to social partnership. Without that partnership the improvements to which we are all committed cannot be delivered.
- Finally, this manifesto is underpinned by a commitment to quality. A new definition is needed which reaches beyond spreadsheet statistics to a wider recognition of the personal and collective advancement that education brings and the practical, everyday experiences of both learners and staff.

The main messages in this manifesto are:

- the removal of all financial barriers to access to education
- a high quality funded education system, accessible to all
- a properly remunerated, valued and respected teaching, research and learning support professional workforce
- institutional autonomy, academic freedom and democratic governance; improved governance and increased accountability is required from both further and higher education institutions in Northern Ireland

- an end to privatisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation of education
- an education service founded on respect for equality and diversity, commitment to the provision of social inclusion and active opposition to all forms of discrimination.

Post-compulsory education

- Education—pre-school to post-retirement—should top the manifestos of all political parties. It must be a priority issue across the political spectrum if Northern Ireland is to realise its full potential as a civil society and an economic force.
- UCU wants progressive policies relating to further and higher education, to meet the needs of all Northern Ireland’s post-compulsory learners.
- UCU is committed to the principles of lifelong learning.
- The essential links between the education and economic sectors need constant nurturing; but it is equally important that the role played by education in creating long term social and political stability and inward investment is recognised.
- Investment in further and higher education will pay dividends for this society—both short term and long term. It cannot be short changed.
- UCU is asking for full recognition of the role further and higher education institutions and training organisations in Northern Ireland have in promoting social integration and respect for diversity; actively combating sectarianism and discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations.
- Our vision is for excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, the promotion of social justice through access for all to good-quality education and to truly democratic and accountable governance within both further and higher education institutions.

Further education

- **FE means business** This strategy for further education is weighted towards employers’ needs, at the expense of education and individual learning needs. UCU call for a further education strategy based on community and social development, individual learning needs while giving full recognition to the role of further education in economic sustainability and development.
- **Staff professionalism** Lecturers in FE have a proud history of teaching and preparing young adults for employment and academic progression. Further education teachers need recognition as to their professional standing; they need professional autonomy to create coherent and relevant learning experiences (often working with reluctant and disadvantaged learners). Their status as professional educators should be recognised by the General Teaching Council. UCU wants to see an end to the creeping casualisation and de-professionalisation of the FE workforce.

- **Fair pay for college lecturers** College lecturers in Northern Ireland are the only group of education workers in the UK whose pay is subject to civil service pay restrictions—they deserve to be treated like lecturers in other devolved regions.

Higher education

- **Higher education review** UCU welcomes the Higher Education Review for Northern Ireland. As we reach the end of the first decade of the 21st century, it is essential that Northern Ireland develops a higher education sector which provides a high quality educational experience, while responding to economic and environmental challenges. Recognition and appreciation of the role of lecturing and research professionals in delivering the long term vision for higher education in Northern Ireland must be at the core of any new HE strategy.
- **Funding for teaching** There is a consensus that teaching in higher education is currently underfunded. This funding gap impacts on academic teaching staff who have larger class sizes, less time to spend with students and engaged on short-term, casual contracts. More resources however, must not be at the expense of funding for research.
- **Privatisation** Private companies operating within higher education are increasing, often with negative impact. Private Public Partnerships and franchising of courses do not promote a stable future. UCU opposes privatisation of higher education.
- **Student fees** UCU is strongly opposed to the introduction of tuition fees. They are a barrier to accessing higher education for thousands of students, particularly those from poorer backgrounds. UCU supports the abolition of tuition fees and the restoration of an effective system of maintenance grants for all students according to their needs.
- **Academic freedom** One of the central purposes of higher education is to serve the public interest through extending knowledge and understanding, by fostering critical thinking and expression in staff and students—and then in society more widely. Academic freedom is essential in a civilised society. However in recent years, academic freedom has been undermined by casualisation of the workforce through contract for services contracts, the excessive use of fixed-term contracts and the intense pressure on staff to attract students and research funding.

Adult education

The profile of adult learning has increased in Northern Ireland over the past 30 years—with a shift to a learning society and a cultural change so that lifelong learning is valued as much as initial education. Inward migration of large numbers of workers from eastern Europe and elsewhere has brought additional demands particularly for language and skills training.

Technological change, along with globalisation, is transforming everyone's

everyday lives. The pace of technological change and innovation had speeded up—changing our ways of learning. There is now a constant pressure for re-skilling and up-skilling throughout our lives.

UCU has developed an alternative vision for adult learning in Northern Ireland, based on key principles such as:

- Affordable, high quality learning, publicly funded education must be available as it is needed, when it is needed and in whatever mode or setting is suitable.
- Adult learning must be viewed as part of everyday life, work and culture in the 21st century—it is a necessary public service and must be funded as such.
- Elected representatives must view adult learning as essential to economic, social and civil regeneration (even more so when we begin to emerge from the current recession).
- Adult learning needs professional and committed practitioners to deliver and manage it.
- Adult learning must have equality and diversity and equal opportunities at its core.
- Adult learning must harness new technologies to meet the needs of learners and empower them in a globalised world.
- Adult learning must be led by further and higher education institutions which have systems of governance that are truly accountable and empower learners, practitioners and their communities, including employers.

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