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Education and Skills Committee

The future sustainability of the higher education sector: international aspects

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The Education and Skills Committee

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Footnotes

In the footnotes for this Report, references to oral evidence are indicated by 'Q' followed by the question number. References to written evidence are indicated by the page number as in 'Ev 12'.

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Summary

The increased internationalisation of higher education potentially brings great benefits, both economic and otherwise, for the UK and its universities. In order to ensure that the UK continues to experience those benefits, there are a number of issues that need to be kept in mind.

Collaboration and partnership working

Collaboration and partnership working are vital for the future development of the international dimension in higher education. We welcome initiatives such as the UK India Education and Research Initiative and recommend that the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the British Council and their partners in the university sector explore the possibility of developing similar arrangements for China and for other countries. Joint ventures are likely to involve the development joint courses and undertaking joint curriculum development, as there will be no further approvals of joint campuses until the Chinese government has assessed the success of those established so far.

We recommend that the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the British Council explore with institutions in China and in the UK how best to build on initiatives already taken to improve collaboration in higher education, including vocational education and the development of pedagogy. As part of that exercise, the Government should provide funding to facilitate collaboration, including the establishment of a major, prestigious foundation, in partnership with the private sector, to provide scholarships and fellowships. These are issues which should be discussed at the high level UK/China summit which we understand is to be held in China in September.

Post-graduate education

The provision of high quality post-graduate education is essential to enable the HE sector to thrive. If the UK higher education sector is to succeed in attracting the most highly qualified students to study here at post-graduate level, it needs to work with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills to provide more systematic support.

UK students travelling abroad

To maximise the benefits of international education, student flows need to be two way. We examined ways of encouraging larger numbers of students from the UK to undertake part of their studies in another country. One is for the HE sector to be more strategic, to decide as a matter of policy that more students should spend time in another country and aim to facilitate that. Another is flexibility. Many students would welcome the opportunity to study abroad for shorter periods—3 or 6 months—rather than a whole year. Having a proper credit transfer system would clearly also be of great benefit. The situation needs to be addressed rapidly to ensure that the UK does not lose out in both cultural and economic terms.

Underlying all of these issues is the need for a concerted drive to improve foreign language capacity. This will require action in schools, but universities should also provide intensive short courses to enable students to undertake study abroad. Some languages, such as Mandarin Chinese, should continue to be treated as strategically important subjects to ensure that capacity in them is retained.

Maintaining quality

International students bring academic, cultural and financial benefits, and the majority of universities have international strategies which recognise that. The HE sector needs, however, to guard against the risk that the recruitment of international students will be seen as driven by short term gains in fee income by ensuring that the teaching and research offered are of high quality. Building genuine partnerships and engaging in thoughtful collaborations will lead to more sustainable relationships with institutions and students from other countries.

Part-time student funding

As participation in higher education has increased, so the nature of the student body has changed. Forty per cent of students are defined as studying part time. Full time students, however, work on average 14 hours a week in paid employment, and 20% work more than 20 hours a week. It is hard to see how someone employed for 20 hours or more each week can be defined as a full time student; yet those students have access to the full range of student support denied to others defined as part time. The distinction between part time and full time students for the purpose of fee and income support is now so blurred as to be no longer sustainable. We recommend that the Government reviews as a matter of urgency the current arrangements for fee support payable to institutions for part time students and the availability of support for part time students themselves. For the future, we believe that students should be seen as one group with a variety of needs for support rather than being arbitrarily divided into categories of part time and full time.

1 Introduction

1. When we issued our call for evidence in this inquiry in November last year, our intention was to undertake a wide-ranging study of the higher education sector. It is ten year since the Dearing report¹ and, while we were not attempting a Dearing follow-up, we wanted to make an assessment of how the sector might look in another ten years time and what challenges it faces along the way. As we said at the time:

“Higher education institutions (HEIs) are semi-autonomous institutions which largely define their own purpose or purposes. Nevertheless, it is appropriate for a government spending over £7.5 billion [each year] on HE to clearly identify what it wants from universities in return for this level of public investment.

In moving further towards a high-skill economy, an increasingly international HE sector, an era of mass-participation in HE, and a possible future market in fees after 2009, this inquiry will investigate questions of first principles in HE: what is the role of universities, what should the principles of funding be, and what should the structure of the HE sector look like or be shaped by?²

2. We have already published one report, on the Bologna Process for the development of a European Higher Education Area.³ We had anticipated that we would produce at least two further reports on various aspects of higher education later in the year. The decision to split the DfES in two and create the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, however, means that this Committee is unlikely to continue in its present form. We have decided therefore that it is important to report now on one part of the inquiry which we have covered in some depth: the international aspects of higher education.

3. We have taken a substantial amount of oral evidence for the inquiry as a whole, and we are grateful to all of those with whom we have held meetings. They are listed at the end of this report. Those who gave evidence specifically on the international aspects of higher education were **Professor John Brennan**, Professor of Higher Education Research, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, The Open University, **Professor Phil Brown**, Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance, **Martin Davidson**, Director General, British Council, **Professor Bernadette Robinson**, UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education Research, University of Nottingham, **Professor Alison Richard**, Vice Chancellor, University of Cambridge, **Professor Georg Winckler**, Rector of the University of Vienna and President of the European University Association (EUA), **Professor Lan Xue**, Vice President of the Development Research Academy for the 21st Century, Tsinghua University, China, and **Tim Gore**, Director of Education for the British Council, India, and head of the UK India Education and Research Initiative. We also received 75 memoranda, and we thank all those who submitted evidence.

1 *Higher Education in the learning society*, Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, July 1997, Chairman: Sir Ron Dearing.

2 Education and Skills Committee press release, 3 November 2006.

3 Education and Skills Committee, Fourth Report of Session 2006–07, *The Bologna Process*, HC 205.

4. The Committee undertook two overseas visits as part of the inquiry: to Australia (Sydney and Canberra), as one of the main alternative destinations to the UK for students from overseas; and to China (Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing), as one of the main exporters of students to other HE systems and as a country which is rapidly developing its own HE sector.

5. We have been assisted in this inquiry by Professor Janet Beer, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Manchester Metropolitan University; Professor Alan Smithers of the Centre for Education and Employment Research at the University of Buckingham; and Professor Sir William Taylor. We thank them for all their work for the Committee.

2 International aspects of higher education

Why internationalism matters

6. There are a number of reasons why what happens internationally in higher education is important to the UK's higher education sector. As we said in our report on the Bologna Process, the UK is the second most popular destination in the world for international students, and the most popular country for study amongst EU students, who make up approximately 5% of students in UK HE institutions.⁴ It has a high reputation for the quality of research; according to Research Councils UK, "In terms of its research base the UK is internationally excellent and highly productive, and by many measures is second only to the US in terms of the quality of its output."⁵ This in turn attracts both investment and people. The British Council told us that over the period from 1995-6 to 2002-03 on average around 1.4 academics arrived in the UK for every one who left.⁶

7. The benefit, in purely financial terms, of being the choice of place of study for 100,000 EU student and over 200,000 non-EU students is enormous. The Higher Education Policy Institute has recently calculated that the net direct cash benefit from fee income and living expenditure of EU students is at least £800 million per year; for non-EU students the figure is £3.3 billion. EU and non-EU students who go on to work in the UK after graduating are calculated to increase GDP by £2 billion per year.⁷ These are huge sums of money for universities and for the wider economy, and so at least maintaining, and preferably increasing, the numbers of students is a vital task.

8. While the picture is relatively good for the higher education sector, there are significant challenges. Research capacity is growing elsewhere, particularly in China and India. We were told that the USA had increased its research investment in China by 25% a year in recent years, but only by 8% a year in the UK.⁸ The expanding economies of countries such as India and China are generating an increasing number of potential HE students and a number of countries have taken steps to make themselves attractive destinations. Australia has substantially increased investment in recruitment measures, and 18 mainly US and Australian international campuses have been established in Singapore in only three years.⁹ We also learnt in Australia that, because of skill shortages, a student studying there might gain points towards residency entitlement, which clearly acts as an incentive.

9. Advantages can quickly erode. Having English as the medium of teaching has helped the UK to maintain its popularity with international students, but now courses taught in English are available in many non-English speaking countries, including France, Germany,

4 Education and Skills Committee, *The Bologna Process*, Paras 81 and 102.

5 Ev 210

6 Ev 183

7 *The Economic Costs and Benefits of International Students*, HEPI, July 2007, para 26.

8 Q 636

9 Ev 184

the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands.¹⁰ Studying for a degree or post-graduate qualification is more expensive in the UK than anywhere else except private US universities,¹¹ and a recent survey suggested that a significant minority of international students thought that the value for money of the education they received in UK HE institutions was unsatisfactory.¹² Institutions may therefore find that they have become reliant on income from international students which is not stable in the medium or long term. On the other hand, we were told that on the basis of costs compared with revenue generated there was no significant financial premium from recruiting international students.¹³

10. International students also constitute more than a quarter of all post-graduate students in the UK, and more than 50% of post-graduates in six broad subject areas.¹⁴ International students are therefore maintaining the viability of some subjects for post-graduate study in this country, as well as providing significant income. In this sense the UK higher education sector, at post-graduate level, is becoming less domestic and more international.

11. The rapid expansion of the HE sectors in China and India presents another challenge for the UK. Half of all non-EU students who study in the UK come from just five countries; China (which accounts for almost a quarter of the total) and India are two of them and Hong Kong is another.¹⁵ Increased HE provision in these countries may well prove attractive to those who might otherwise travel abroad to study, not least because of reduced costs.

12. Martin Davidson, Director General of the British Council, described the factors that led international students to choose a particular country or institution in which to study:

“They are looking for, first of all, the quality of the educational experience they are going to get, they are looking for international comparability and usability of the qualifications they obtain, they are looking for the quality of the experience that they get and they are looking for the capacity to improve their work opportunities on graduation. That set of things which the international students are looking for is pretty well founded and clearly students see themselves as operating in the international market, they will move to whichever country, or set of institutions, is able to deliver that set of goods for them.”¹⁶

13. Is internationalism in higher education anything more, however, than a market in which the most successful operators are able to generate increased income? Professor Alison Richard, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, argued that it had other less tangible but vitally important characteristics:

10 Q 634

11 Ev 183

12 *The Economic Costs and Benefits of International Students*, para 33.

13 Qq 760-1

14 Ev 183, para 10, Ev 184, para 14, and Q 633. The subject areas are: law; engineering and technology; business and administrative studies; architecture, building and planning; computer science; and social studies.

15 Ev 184, para 12. The USA and Malaysia are the other two countries.

16 Q 580

“Why is all of this important? Speaking locally, parochially, for Cambridge it is absolutely a matter of keeping the university among the handful of universities recognised as the best in the world. For the nation, universities extend the UK’s influence around the world, in addition to being a foreign currency earner, through the students we educate and through the impact of our research. Finally, I believe it is healthy, helpful and actually critical for there to be several centres of excellence in the world. The UK is one and it is of global importance, not just of national importance, that we remain one.”¹⁷

We agree that increased internationalisation of higher education potentially brings great benefits, both economic and otherwise, for the UK and its universities. We now turn to look at a number of issues which we believe need to be addressed if the UK is to build on its position of strength internationally.

International collaboration

14. One of the main messages that were heard on visits and in evidence was that in order to maintain its position as one of the most popular countries for international students, it was important for the UK and UK institutions to develop collaborations, not just to treat students as a market to be exploited. Professor Bernadette Robinson of the University of Nottingham argued that the development of cross-national relationships would be a vital factor in sustaining student flows and generating research projects.¹⁸ Professor Lan Xue of Tsinghua University said that UK universities had been aiming largely at attracting students to the UK rather than developing collaborative programmes. The UK was not in the top 5 of countries whose HE institutions were involved in joint programmes with Chinese universities.¹⁹

15. The emphasis on collaboration is born out of a recognition that the developing capacity of the higher education sectors in places such as India and China means that some of their institutions will increasingly be seen as leaders in particular research fields. Professor Phil Brown of the Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance, Cardiff University, said:

“I think, more and more, we have got to stop thinking that we are going to be the winners all the time; basically, more of these research jobs now are going to go to Asia. I think the thing that we have to do, more than anything else, is develop the links, international links, with other high-rated universities and research institutes so that we will get some of this work. It is highly likely that the leading corporations will not be putting all their eggs in one basket, they will be spreading a lot of this work and development around and we have to get a slice of that action.”²⁰

16. There is already an initiative in place to try to address these issues in relation to India. The UK India Education and Research Initiative, a collaborative venture managed by the

17 Q 746

18 Q 609

19 Qq 795, 801

20 Q 635

British Council, established numerous partnership arrangements in 2006-07, including 30 research partnerships and seven collaborations on HE teaching.²¹ Tim Gore, Director of Education for the British Council in India, said that if the UK wanted the best students who would stay on to do post-graduate work, then it had to be done

“By partnerships, not with pure marketing; there has to be a brand presence of the UK universities [...]. They have to be recognised, they have to do things, they have to engage, they have to give talks, they have to engage in high level activities, and that will build the interest.”²²

17. There are already collaborative ventures between the UK and Chinese higher education sectors. The Universities of Nottingham and Liverpool have both established campuses in China, and we met staff of the University of Nottingham Ningbo campus and visited Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University during our visit to China. The former is a joint venture with Zhejiang Wanli Education, based in Ningbo, and the Liverpool venture is a joint project with Xi'an Jiaotong University. Both are private HEIs and receive no funding from the Chinese government. Professor Lan praised the Ningbo venture but thought it would be a difficult example to follow because of the of the high level of investment on both sides.²³ Both Ningbo and XJTLU have approval from the Ministry of Education, but we were told that the Ministry was unlikely to sanction any further joint ventures until it has assessed how well these were working. Collaboration is therefore more likely to be on matters such as joint course development.²⁴

18. We agree that collaboration and partnership working are vital for the future development of the international dimension in higher education. We welcome projects such as the UK India Education and Research Initiative and recommend that the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the British Council and their partners in the university sector explore the possibility of developing similar arrangements for China and for other countries. Joint ventures are likely to involve the development joint courses and undertaking joint curriculum development, as there will be no further approvals of joint campuses until the Chinese government has assessed the success of those established so far.

19. It is important that it is not just the research-intensive universities which engage in international collaboration. Professor Richard spoke about “an array of universities [in the UK] doing rather different things and many of them doing [them] very well [...] Anglia Ruskin does things that Cambridge University cannot do and vice versa.”²⁵ CMU told us that “Modern universities have spearheaded international partnerships and recruitment, established campuses overseas, provided flexible opportunities through e-learning for domestic and international students and are key contributors to UK exports and trade in higher education.”²⁶

21 Q 817

22 Q 826

23 Qq 806-7

24 Q 610

25 Q 750

26 Ev 329, para 14

20. The Shanghai Municipal Education Commission told us that there is an increasing focus on vocational education by the Chinese government. Sixty per cent of senior secondary students are on the academic route and the other 40% are on the vocational route. There are no fees for vocational courses and grants are available for students. The Commission is already working with some overseas institutions (for example from Germany and Australia) on vocational education. The development of pedagogy is another issue that was raised with us on a number of occasions during our visit. Professor Lan agreed that there was scope for involvement by UK universities, but emphasised again that any initiatives had to be structured and collaborative.²⁷ **We recommend that the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the British Council explore with institutions in China and in the UK how best to build on initiatives already taken to improve collaboration in higher education, including vocational education and the development of pedagogy. As part of that exercise, the Government should provide funding to facilitate collaboration, including the establishment of a major, prestigious foundation, in partnership with the private sector, to provide scholarships and fellowships. These are issues which should be discussed at the high level UK/China summit which we understand is to be held in China in September.**

Support for post-graduate students

21. We discussed ways of improving the experience for post-graduate students seeking to come to the UK. Professor Richard said that the UK under-funded post-graduate education, certainly by comparison with the US, where leading universities would pay fees and give generous bursaries to ensure the most highly qualified students went to them.²⁸ This lack of structured support helps to explain why Chinese students come to Britain in large numbers for undergraduate or one year Masters courses but less so for doctoral studies.²⁹ **The provision of high quality post-graduate education is essential to enable the HE sector to thrive. If the UK higher education sector is to succeed in attracting the most highly qualified students to study here at post-graduate level, it needs to work with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills to provide more systematic support.**

UK students travelling abroad

22. To maximise the benefits of international education, student flows need to be two way. We examined ways of encouraging larger numbers of students from the UK to undertake part of their studies in another country. We were told that the number of UK students going abroad on the EU's Erasmus programme had reduced in recent years,³⁰ although UK student mobility was still around the average for countries in the programme.³¹ A variety of reasons for this decline and relative lack of mobility were put to us, including lack of language knowledge, questions about the acceptability of credits from courses taken abroad

27 Q 813-4

28 Q 757

29 Q 805

30 Q 583

31 Q 782

to UK institutions, cost and the perceived usefulness of taking part in the programmes.³² It was also suggested that with most UK undergraduate courses lasting for three years it was more difficult to find time for overseas study than for students from continental European countries whose courses tend to last longer.³³

23. We looked at these issues when we examined the Bologna Process, and the recommendations we made there still stand, including the need for a targeted fund to encourage mobility, especially amongst students who live at home while at university.³⁴

24. The problem of students' unwillingness to study abroad can be addressed in a number of ways. One is for the HE sector to be more strategic, to decide as a matter of policy that more students should spend time in another country and aim to facilitate that. Another is flexibility. Many students would welcome the opportunity to study abroad for shorter periods—3 or 6 months—rather than a whole year. Having a proper credit transfer system would clearly also be of great benefit. The situation needs to be addressed rapidly to ensure that the UK does not lose out in both cultural and economic terms.

25. Underlying all of these issues is the need for a concerted drive to improve foreign language capacity. This will require action in schools, but universities should also provide intensive short courses to enable students to undertake study abroad. Some languages, such as Mandarin Chinese, should continue to be treated as strategically important subjects to ensure that capacity in them is retained.

The quality of education

26. The quality of the education on offer is key to continued success in attracting international students to the UK. As the Chief Executive of HEFCE said in our very first meeting in the inquiry, the UK cannot compete on price, so it must compete on quality.³⁵ Two aspects in particular interest us here; the quality of the experience international students have when coming to the UK, and the quality assurance for collaborative ventures involving UK universities abroad.

27. On the first, we were told that some students are dissatisfied if the majority of students on their course are also from overseas. Martin Davidson said:

“[...] there is very strong evidence of dissatisfaction amongst students about the educational experience they get if there is a predominance of foreign students, particularly if it is a predominance of foreign students from a particular country, most usually China, on that particular course. Certainly there are some courses in the UK where upwards of 75% of the students may well be from overseas, and I think that does have an impact on the overall reputation of the institution overseas.”³⁶

32 Q 583

33 Q 585

34 *The Bologna Process*, paras 54 to 57.

35 Q 113

36 Q 601

28. Professor Richard said that the UK had to operate “at the very high end of quality” and that there was a risk that, to address “the under funding of our educational activities historically”, universities would be tempted

“to go for volume rather than go for quality. You bring in overseas students at premium fees. They are not necessarily the best students, because the best students will be going to institutions that will give them financial support, and then they do not get the experience that they had anticipated paying those premium fees and you suddenly get into a downward spiral”.³⁷

International students bring academic, cultural and financial benefits, and the majority of universities have international strategies which recognise that. The HE sector needs, however, to guard against the risk that the recruitment of international students will be seen as driven by short term gains in fee income by ensuring that the teaching and research offered are of high quality. Building genuine partnerships and engaging in thoughtful collaborations will lead to more sustainable relationships with institutions and students from other countries.

29. UK institutions offering courses in other countries are subject to scrutiny by the Quality Assurance Agency. We were told in China that there had been some sensitivity there about an overseas agency coming to examine institutions, which we hope the QAA will take note of for the future. Professor Lan said that there were state council regulations regarding standards for collaboration and joint programmes, but that in the first instance it was for institutions themselves to evaluate the quality of their partners. The ultimate arbiters of quality would be the students, saying whether or not the education they were receiving was of high quality.³⁸ **Universities need to ensure that their partnerships in other countries are designed to provide high quality education in order to be sustainable for the long term.**

37 Q 754

38 Q 812

3 Funding for part time students

30. One of our reasons for visiting Australia was to learn lessons generally from the experiences of a well developed higher education sector. As 2006-07 is the academic year in which variable fees have been introduced in England, we discussed with a number of our Australian hosts the experience of the Higher Education Contribution System (HECS), which was the original model for the fees system here. There are a number of differences between the Australian and English systems, an important one being that in Australia the level of fees payable depends on the course being taken. Another significant difference is that in Australia there is no distinction in terms of the support offered to students between those who are studying part-time and those studying full time

31. While funding for fees and grants for part time students in England has increased, they are not included in the variable fees scheme, nor do they have access to student loans. We were told that funding of fees for part time students is currently 50% of what it would be if it was set at an equivalent level to that for full time students.³⁹ On student support, the highest grant available for those eligible is £250, and research by South Bank University has suggested that 58% of those eligible spend more than that on course costs.⁴⁰

32. As participation in higher education has increased, so the nature of the student body has changed. Forty per cent of students are defined as studying part time.⁴¹ Full time students, however, work on average 14 hours a week in paid employment, and 20% work more than 20 hours a week.⁴² It is hard to see how someone employed for 20 hours or more each week can be defined as a full time student; yet those students have access to the full range of student support denied to others defined as part time.

33. Professor David Vincent, Pro-Vice Chancellor of The Open University, told us:

“There are advanced systems, and Australia is one, where there is no distinction whatsoever between full and part time, where the category of part time has no meaning. They are just all proportions of a student. In an ideal world we would have that system here.”⁴³

Along with Professor David Latchman, Master of Birkbeck College, University of London, he advocated as a short term solution a premium payable to those institutions whose student body was constituted entirely of part-time students, and that in the medium term there should be a premium for all part time students wherever they study.⁴⁴

34. The distinction between part time and full time students for the purpose of fee and income support is now so blurred as to be no longer sustainable. **We recommend that the Government reviews as a matter of urgency the current arrangements for fee support**

39 Q 232

40 Q 237

41 Q 232

42 Q 172

43 Q 257

44 *ibid.*

payable to institutions for part time students and the availability of support for part time students themselves. For the future, we believe that students should be seen as one group with a variety of needs for support rather than being arbitrarily divided into categories of part time and full time.

4 The future sustainability of the higher education sector: further issues

35. As we said at the beginning of this report, we had been intending in this inquiry to examine a wide range of issues in this inquiry in addition to the international aspects of higher education. We have touched on some of those issues in this brief report, but they would all benefit from a more detailed discussion.

36. On the structure of the sector, for example, Professor Richard, as we mentioned earlier, spoke about the variety of universities and the discomfort that the sector seemed to display about it, in contrast to the US, which has a much greater degree of comfort with the idea of diversity within the university system:

“What I see happening in the UK is you have an array of universities doing rather different things and many of them doing [them] very well; then you spin it through 90 degrees, you rank order everybody and then you are suddenly saying: Cambridge is up here and Anglia Ruskin, which is in the city of Cambridge, somehow ranks much lower than Cambridge. Well, actually, Anglia Ruskin does things that Cambridge University cannot do and does not do and *vice versa*, and we have got to get more comfortable with the idea of ourselves as an eco-system.”⁴⁵

37. This echoes a comment made by the previous Chief Executive of HEFCE that, in relation to universities, the English “do have a genius for turning diversity into hierarchy”.⁴⁶ This issue of the structure of the HE sector—how different institutions differentiate themselves and what role, if any, the Government has in shaping the structure—was one of the main subjects that we sought evidence on at the beginning of the inquiry, along with the funding of universities and, perhaps most fundamentally of all, what the role of universities should be over the next ten years. On this last point there are vital questions to be addressed: what do students want from universities; what do employers want from graduates; and what should the Government, and society more broadly, want from the HE sector?

38. We recommend that our successors on the committee that scrutinises the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills should continue our inquiry and report on the issues of the structure of the HE sector; university funding (including levels of investment in research in comparison with competitor countries); and the role of universities over the next decade.

45 Q 750

46 Education and Skills Committee, Fifth Report of Session 2002-03, *The Future of Higher Education*, HC 425-II, Ev 119

Conclusions and recommendations

Why internationalism matters

1. We agree that increased internationalisation of higher education potentially brings great benefits, both economic and otherwise, for the UK and its universities. (Paragraph 13)

International collaboration

2. We agree that collaboration and partnership working are vital for the future development of the international dimension in higher education. We welcome projects such as the UK India Education and Research Initiative and recommend that the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the British Council and their partners in the university sector explore the possibility of developing similar arrangements for China and for other countries. Joint ventures are likely to involve the development joint courses and undertaking joint curriculum development, as there will be no further approvals of joint campuses until the Chinese government has assessed the success of those established so far. (Paragraph 18)
3. We recommend that the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the British Council explore with institutions in China and in the UK how best to build on initiatives already taken to improve collaboration in higher education, including vocational education and the development of pedagogy. As part of that exercise, the Government should provide funding to facilitate collaboration, including the establishment of a major, prestigious foundation, in partnership with the private sector, to provide scholarships and fellowships. These are issues which should be discussed at the high level UK/China summit which we understand is to be held in China in September. (Paragraph 20)
4. The provision of high quality post-graduate education is essential to enable the HE sector to thrive. If the UK higher education sector is to succeed in attracting the most highly qualified students to study here at post-graduate level, it needs to work with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills to provide more systematic support. (Paragraph 21)
5. The problem of students' unwillingness to study abroad can be addressed in a number of ways. One is for the HE sector to be more strategic, to decide as a matter of policy that more students should spend time in another country and aim to facilitate that. Another is flexibility. Many students would welcome the opportunity to study abroad for shorter periods—3 or 6 months—rather than a whole year. Having a proper credit transfer system would clearly also be of great benefit. The situation needs to be addressed rapidly to ensure that the UK does not lose out in both cultural and economic terms. (Paragraph 24)
6. Underlying all of these issues is the need for a concerted drive to improve foreign language capacity. This will require action in schools, but universities should also provide intensive short courses to enable students to undertake study abroad. Some

languages, such as Mandarin Chinese, should continue to be treated as strategically important subjects to ensure that capacity in them is retained. (Paragraph 25)

7. International students bring academic, cultural and financial benefits, and the majority of universities have international strategies which recognise that. The HE sector needs, however, to guard against the risk that the recruitment of international students will be seen as driven by short term gains in fee income by ensuring that the teaching and research offered are of high quality. Building genuine partnerships and engaging in thoughtful collaborations will lead to more sustainable relationships with institutions and students from other countries. (Paragraph 28)
8. Universities need to ensure that their partnerships in other countries are designed to provide high quality education in order to be sustainable for the long term. (Paragraph 29)

Funding for part time students

9. We recommend that the Government reviews as a matter of urgency the current arrangements for fee support payable to institutions for part time students and the availability of support for part time students themselves. For the future, we believe that students should be seen as one group with a variety of needs for support rather than being arbitrarily divided into categories of part time and full time. (Paragraph 34)

The future sustainability of the higher education sector: further issues

10. We recommend that our successors on the committee that scrutinises the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills should continue our inquiry and report on the issues of the structure of the HE sector; university funding (including levels of investment in research in comparison with competitor countries); and the role of universities over the next decade. (Paragraph 38)

Formal minutes

Monday 23 July 2007

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor
Mr Gordon Marsden

Stephen Williams

The future sustainability of the higher education sector: international aspects

The Committee considered this matter.

Draft Report, proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Chairman's draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 38 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Eighth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Ordered, That memoranda be appended to the report.

Ordered, That the memoranda be reported to the House.

Several Memoranda were ordered to be reported to the House for placing in the Library and Parliamentary archives.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 25 July at 9.15 am

Witnesses (Volume II)

Monday 29 January 2007

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Professor David Eastwood, Chief Executive, Higher Education Funding Council for England

Ev 18

Monday 19 February 2007

Ms Gemma Tumelty, President, and **Mr Wes Streeting**, Vice President (Education), National Union of Students, **Professor Michael Arthur**, Vice Chancellor, University of Leeds, and Chair of the National Student Survey Steering Group, and **Ms Tabitha Aldrich-Smith**, Corporate Affairs Director, UNITE

Ev 45

Mr Jim Hillage, Institute for Employment Studies, **Ms Anna Vignoles**, Centre for Economics of Education, Institute of Education, **Mr Ken Mayhew**, Director, Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (SKOPE), **Mr Peter Elias**, Institute for Employment Research, and **Mr Carl Gilleard**, Chief Executive, Association of Graduate Recruiters

Ev 65

Monday 26 February 2007

Professor David Latchman, Master of Birkbeck College, University of London, **Professor David Vincent**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Strategy, Planning and External Affairs), The Open University, and **Professor Claire Callender**, Professor of Social Policy, London South Bank University

Ev 87

Professor Robert Burgess, Vice Chancellor of Leicester University and Chair of the Burgess Group on Measuring and Recording Student Achievement

Ev 100

Wednesday 7 March 2007

Professor Sir David Watson former Vice Chancellor of Brighton University, now Professor of Education and Management, Institute of Education

Ev 109

Professor Lorraine Dearden, Director, Centre for Early Years and Education Research, The Institute for Fiscal Studies, **Professor John Storan**, Director, Action on Access, and **Mr Andy Wilson**, Principal, Westminster Kingsway College

Ev 117

Wednesday 21 March 2007

Professor Tim Wilson, Vice Chancellor, University of Hertfordshire, **Mr Richard Brown**, Chief Executive, Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE), **Mr Richard Greenhalgh**, Chairman of CIHE and Deputy Chairman of the QCA, former Chairman of Unilever Ltd and Fellow, Templeton College Oxford

Ev 151

Professor Alan Gilbert, President, University of Manchester, and **Professor Michael Worton**, Vice-Provost, University College London

Ev 167

Monday 23 April 2007

Professor John Brennan, Professor of Higher Education Research, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, The Open University, **Professor Phil Brown**, Centre on Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance, **Martin Davidson**, Chief Executive, British Council, and **Professor Bernadette Robinson**, UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education Research, University of Nottingham Ev 187

Wednesday 16 May 2007

Professor Ian Diamond, Chair of Research Councils UK and Chief Executive of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and **Professor Ole H Petersen**, previous Vice President of the Royal Society and MRC Professor of Physiology, The University of Liverpool Ev 227

Wednesday 4 July 2007

Professor Alison Richard, Vice Chancellor, University of Cambridge, and **Professor Georg Winckler**, Rector of the University of Vienna and President of the European University Association (EUA) Ev 248

Professor Lan Xue, Vice President of the Development Research Academy for the 21st Century, Tsinghua University, China and **Mr Tim Gore**, Director of Education for the British Council, India, and head of the UK India Education and Research Initiative Ev 265

List of written evidence (Volume II)

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| 1 | Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) | Ev 1: Ev 35 |
| 2 | Professor Michael Arthur | Ev 37 |
| 3 | National Union of Students (NUS) | Ev 40 |
| 4 | The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) | Ev 54 |
| 5 | Professor David Latchman, Master of Birkbeck College, University of London | Ev 77 |
| 6 | The Open University (OU) | Ev 81: Ev 86: Ev 99 |
| 7 | Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) of the Institute of Education, University of London | Ev 106 |
| 8 | Action on Access | Ev 127 |
| 9 | Andy Wilson, Westminster Kingsway College (WKC) | Ev 133 |
| 10 | University of Hertfordshire (UH) | Ev 134: Ev 165 |
| 11 | Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) | Ev 144: Ev 163 |
| 12 | Professor John Brennan, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI), Open University | Ev 178 |
| 13 | British Council | Ev 181: Ev 472 |
| 14 | Research Councils UK (RCUK) | Ev 208 |
| 15 | The Royal Society | Ev 217 |
| 16 | Professor Alison Richard, Vice-Chancellor, The University of Cambridge | Ev 246 |

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| 17 | Professor Georg Winckler, President of the European University Association (EUA), Rector of the University of Vienna | Ev 247 |
| 18 | Tim Gore, Director of Education, The British Council, India | Ev 259 |
| 19 | Department for Education and Skills (DfES) | Ev 273 |
| 20 | 1994 Group | Ev 282 |
| 21 | Amicus | Ev 291 |
| 22 | Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) | Ev 295 |
| 23 | Association of Colleges (AoC) | Ev 297 |
| 24 | British Computer Society (BCS) | Ev 301 |
| 25 | The British Education Research Association (BERA) and The Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) | Ev 308 |
| 26 | The British Medical Association (BMA) | Ev 310 |
| 27 | Professor Roger Brown, Southampton Solent University | Ev 313 |
| 28 | Campaign for Science and Engineering (CaSE) | Ev 314 |
| 29 | Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) | Ev 320 |
| 30 | City and Guilds of London Institute | Ev 326 |
| 31 | CMU Universities Group | Ev 327 |
| 32 | Conservatoires UK | Ev 346 |
| 33 | James Derounian | Ev 349 |
| 34 | Paul Double, City Remembrancer, Guildhall | Ev 350 |
| 35 | Engineering Professors' Council (EPC) | Ev 351 |
| 36 | General Optical Council (GOC) | Ev 360 |
| 37 | GuildHE | Ev 362 |
| 38 | Heads of Chemistry UK (HCUK) | Ev 365 |
| 39 | Higher Education Academy | Ev 365 |
| 40 | Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) | Ev 374 |
| 41 | Imperial College Union | Ev 377 |
| 42 | The Institute of Physics | Ev 378 |
| 43 | Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) | Ev 387 |
| 44 | The Joint Committee for Psychology in Higher Education | Ev 389 |
| 45 | London Knowledge Lab of the Institute of Education, University of London | Ev 392 |
| 46 | London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine | Ev 397 |
| 47 | Ian McNay, Professor Emeritus, Higher Education and Management, University of Greenwich | Ev 398 |
| 48 | The Medical Schools Council (formerly the Council of Heads of Medical Schools (CHMS)) | Ev 400 |
| 49 | Mixed Economy Group of Colleges (MEG) | Ev 403 |
| 50 | William Devine, Chief Executive Officer, the National Forum of Engineering Centres (NFEC) | Ev 405 |
| 51 | National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) | Ev 410 |
| 52 | National Postgraduate Committee (NPC) | Ev 416 |
| 53 | Queen Mary, University of London | Ev 420 |
| 54 | Research and Development Society | Ev 421 |
| 55 | The Royal Academy of Engineering | Ev 425 |
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| 58 | The Russell Group | Ev 433 |
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| 60 | The UK Inter-Professional Group (UKIPG) | Ev 436 |
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| 65 | University of Kent | Ev 462 |
| 66 | University of London Union (ULU) | Ev 465 |
| 67 | Wellcome Trust | Ev 470 |

List of unprinted evidence

The following memoranda have been reported to the House, but to save printing costs they have not been printed and copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library, where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Parliamentary Archives, and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to The Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0PW (tel. 020 7219 3074). Opening hours are from 9.30 am to 5.00 pm on Mondays to Fridays.

G R Evans

Dr J R Lukes

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

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| First Report | The Work of the Committee in 2005–06 | HC 301 |
| Second Report | Citizenship Education | HC 147 (HC 517) |
| Third Report | Bullying | HC 85 (HC 600) |
| Fourth Report | The Bologna Process | HC 205 (HC 788) |
| Fifth Report | 14–19 Diplomas | HC 249 |
| Sixth Report | The Work of Ofsted | HC 165 |
| Seventh Report | Sustainable Schools: <i>Are we building schools for the future?</i> | HC 140-I and II |

Session 2005–06

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| First Report | Schools White Paper: <i>Higher Standards, Better Schools For All</i> | HC 633-I and II (Cm 6747) |
| Second Report | Public Expenditure on Education and Skills | HC 479 (HC 1132) |
| Third Report | Special Educational Needs | HC 478-I, II and III (Cm 6940) |
| Fourth Report | Further Education | HC 649 (HC 1712) |
| Fifth Report | Public Expenditure | HC 1201 (HC 211) |