

# Higher Education Funding

## Survey Analysis

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## **Why did we Conduct the Survey?**

In June 2014 the Union's previous Higher Education Policy expired. Union Council, the main policy setting body of the Union, mandated the Officer Trustees to collate direct information reflective of the views of all students in order to form a new policy. With approval from the Union Council of the 2014-15 years we took the decision to do this by implementing a survey.

The issue is important to the Union because it will affect thousands of students over the coming years from every possible background. In particular, with a general election occurring in May 2015 there could be significant changes to policy occurring in the coming years and the debate in the lead-up to the elections could feature Higher Education Funding prominently. As a leading university who have recently been ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world in the QS survey we have a very strong platform to lobby from and our views may genuinely influence opinion at a high level. As such, forming a strong policy that is well founded on the opinions of our real students and based on evidence is highly important in giving us our best chance to exert this influence.

## **How did we Conduct the Survey?**

A survey, such as this, allows a great deal of information to be gained and it was important to us to try to use this opportunity to gain data on a number of issues to try to create a thorough policy. However, this has to be tempered with respect to how many people would fill in the survey and so the decision was taken to focus primarily around Home Undergraduate funding. While this narrowed the scope of the survey significantly, it allowed a relatively extensive exploration of the issues surrounding the current and other proposed systems without making the survey too long and onerous to complete. This was also assisted by the use of the colleges online survey platform; qualtrics, which allowed a great deal of data to be gathered without manual user input based on respondent college logins. The platform does have potential downsides though, some comments suggested that the look of the platform was unappealing and inaccessible and there is the disadvantage with a purely online survey that there may be accessibility problems, however it was felt that this was the best option.

The survey was initially drafted by the Officer Trustee team and focussed on three issues around higher education funding before asking some more general questions. This draft was then fed back to Union Council for feedback and input prior to the final version being launched at midday on 4 November 2014. The survey ran for two weeks closing on 19 November with open surveys being allowed to conclude.

The full text of the presented survey can be found in screenshots appended to this document. However, format remained as described. The three issues probed were:

1. 'The Price and Who Pays It' – intended to discover how much we think university should cost and who we believe should be contributing to paying it
2. 'How do we Ensure the Best Education' – intended to look at how the way we fund higher education may affect the quality and calibre of education students receive

3. 'Will I be in debt' – intended to look at how perception of the price of university and the debt accrued affects attitudes towards education

We finally then asked students to rank these areas in what they felt was importance order as well as asking them both what system of funding they would ultimately like to see as well as what they felt was the model that was most pressing in terms of a lobbying objective. The models focussed upon were Tuition Fees, Free Education and Graduate Tax. For a description of these models please see our HEF Factsheet at [imperialcollegeunion.org/HEF-Factsheet](http://imperialcollegeunion.org/HEF-Factsheet).

## How did we Advertise the Survey?

One criticism of the survey was that it was not well publicised. As such, an explanation of our marketing strategy for the survey seems appropriate. The first port of call for the survey was intended to be the Union website. A news piece about the survey was promoted to the website homepage during the course of the survey. In addition we used Union twitter accounts to promote this further with the #HEF\_ICU hashtag. Further to this we made use of posters in the bar area and circulated promotional material and information to the ~500 strong rep network. Finally, with thanks to Andrew Tranter for his contribution here, we added to that an article on the HEF debate and mentioning the survey, kindly published by our student newspaper Felix, which can be found at [felixonline.co.uk/features/4871/educating-the-masses-on-funding/](http://felixonline.co.uk/features/4871/educating-the-masses-on-funding/). It is our hope that this shows sufficient effort was made to try to gain a broad reach and exposure for the survey in order to try to get a representative set of responses.



## Does it Reflect what Respondents Thought?

It would be very easy to relate the results of this survey without assessing its validity. With such a limited space available it is important that our survey is addressing the correct issues and within those issues allowing options that reflect the spread of opinions. As such we used several metrics within the survey that gave a hint as to whether these opinions were actively reflecting opinions. Firstly, when asked to rank the three main issues in order of importance over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of students had "Issues we have not covered" as last on their list of priorities and only 5% had this as their most important. These students, in their free-text comments, mentioned a number of interesting things including reverting to previous systems of university funding as well as the problems of university living costs, the system of grants

and student loans available being made or maintained to support any student attending university and the system letting down PG students, particularly those on 1 year masters courses. These thoughts were often echoed by other students and also featured the cost for overseas students and a number of comments about transparency about how Tuition Fees are spent.

For all our questions we tried to give a negative response option. In our 3 main opinion questions regarding the issues described we had less than 2% return a negative response for Issue 1 above and less than 10% for Issue 3. For Issue 2 there was a higher (~20%) rate of students feeling that none of the statements matched their opinion suggesting that a range of opinions were felt about this difficult issue. We also looked at how closely people's opinions matched with the statements they chose. Using a ranking running from Exactly at 100% down through 75% for Small differences, 50% for Significant differences and 25% for Poorly but closest option we took an average and found that most people considered they had small differences of opinion to their chosen statement and on average for all but one issue people had 70% confidence in their answer or better. As such we feel that this is good evidence that the issues probed and the options given were valid and did reflect reasonably well most respondents' views.

## How did we Handle the Data?

After the survey closed a period of time for open surveys to conclude was given prior to downloading the tabulated results as a spreadsheet. This raw data contained personal login data. This was used to add departmental, course and fee status data to the results before individual information was deleted to maintain anonymity. Duplicate results were then reconciled using the most recent answers to questions chronologically or combining free text responses where possible. Results from non-students, incorrect login details and empty surveys were eliminated. The resulting spreadsheet was compared with historical and current demographic information and statistics created primarily using automated formulas.

### College Demographic



### Survey Demographic



## Who Took the Survey?

There is another aspect to assessing the validity of the survey responses. Are the respondents reasonably reflective of the makeup of the college and are there sufficient numbers of

them to be valid. The final number of respondents to the survey was 310. This is 1.84% of our current 16,838 students (according to Registry data taken at 15:30 on 25 November 2014). For a large population this is likely to be a reasonable estimator if it is an unbiased sample. However, the Union is made up of a diverse range of students; UG and PG(R&T); Home, EU or Overseas and from a variety of subjects and faculties. It is worth noticing how

College Demographic



Sample Demographic



closely our survey aligns with the Student population. Perhaps the easiest statistic to look at is the gender ratio. As can be seen below, good agreement between our survey data and the historic (June 2013) college gender ratio.

However, if we look instead at the different course types (UG, PGR and PGT) we find that we are significantly under-representing both groups of post graduate students in this sample. The un-labelled bar in the below graphic is the results from Officer Trustees. This is not greatly surprising but should be borne in mind when interpreting the results. In general it is more difficult to engage with Post-Graduate Students who have high workloads and less interest in many of the Union’s services. In addition, this survey focussed primarily on Home Undergraduate Fees and therefore may have been of less perceived value in answering.

This may also be true for EU and Overseas students. As we can see from the chart here this is surprisingly not the case for EU students who have a very similar response rate to their proportion in the June 2013 makeup of college. However, this is not the case for Overseas students who are again, under-represented here quite significantly and commensurately our Home students are the best represented set of opinions here.

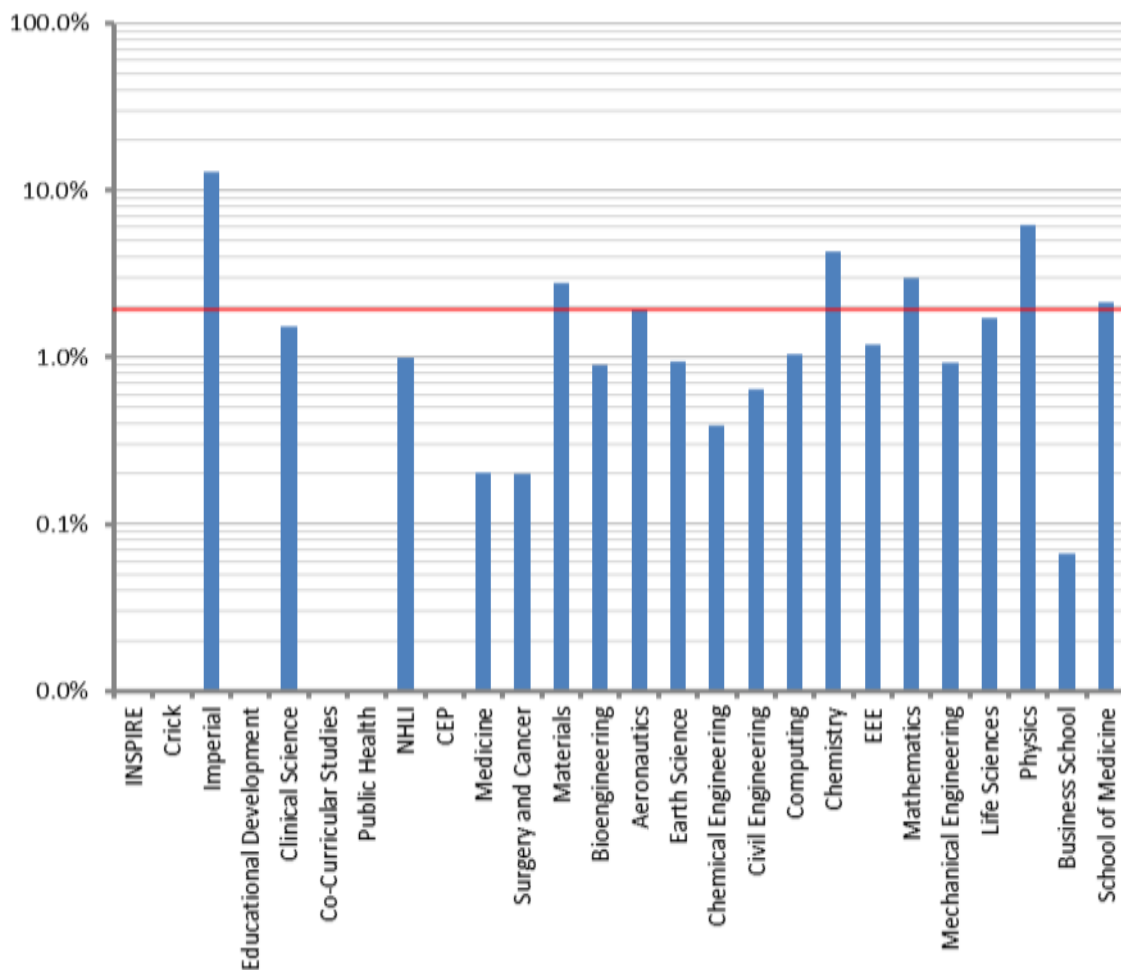
Our other statistic, for which we have up to date data is which Faculties and Departments respondents come from.



As you can see, the Faculty of Natural Sciences (FoNS) is particularly well represented with over 50% of respondents compared with just under 30% of current students. Both the Faculties of Engineering and Medicine (FoE and FoM respectively) lose out to Natural sciences. But where Medicine is reasonably well represented with just under 17% compared with 22% of actual students Engineering loses out significantly with only 24.5% of survey respondents compared with 40% of current students in that faculty. We can probe this slightly further by looking at the percentage of each individual department that responded.

In the graph shown below departments (which are in some cases noted with abbreviated names) are arranged by size and the percentage of the department that responded to the survey. As can be seen many of the particularly small departments have quite a high variance compared with the average (shown approximately with the red line in the bar chart). Most of these are under-represented, which suggests there are a number of underrepresented groups within college here; many of whom differ greatly in terms of their primary research/study interest from the rest of the university. In terms of the larger departments we can see that Physics responded at about three times the average percentage, being the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest department this, along with above average responses from Mathematics and Chemistry) mostly explains the above average response of FoNS. It is notable that engineering was widely below average but were not as under-represented as the Business School or Post-graduate Medical subjects.

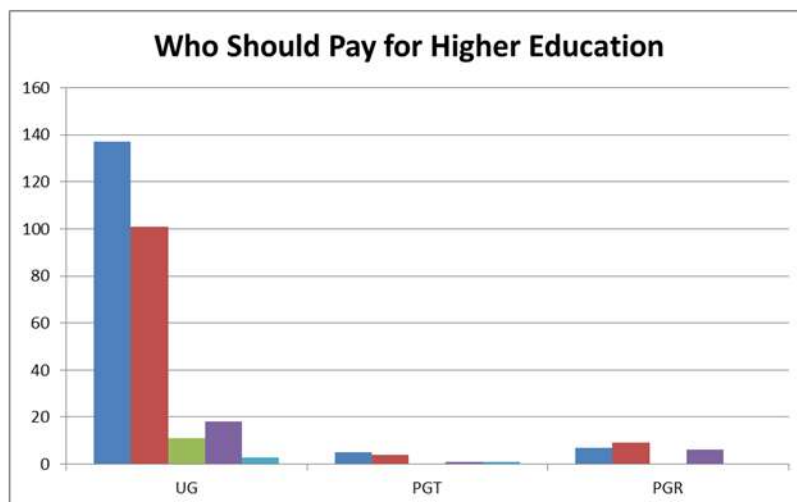
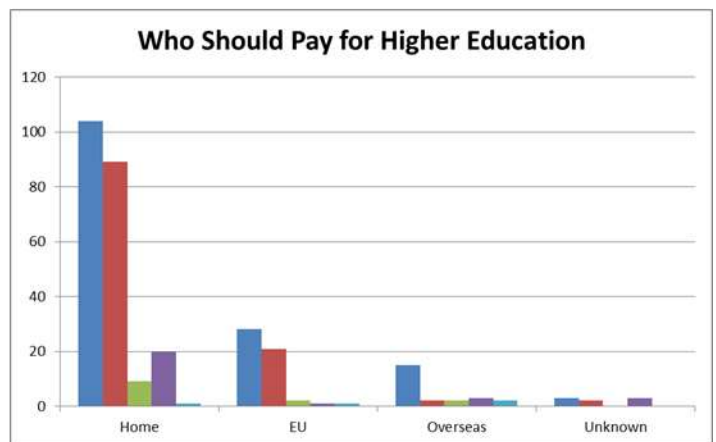
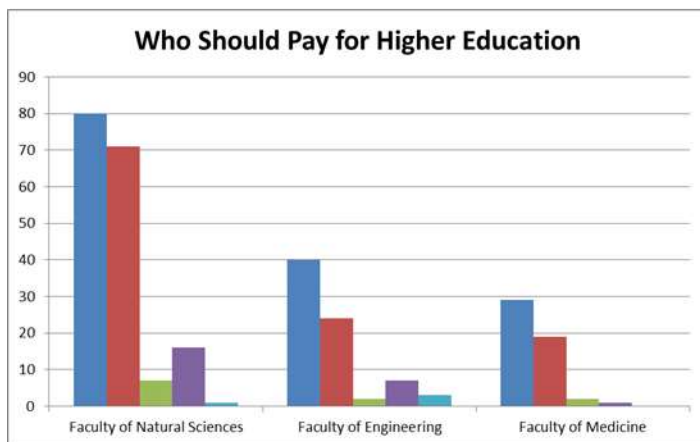
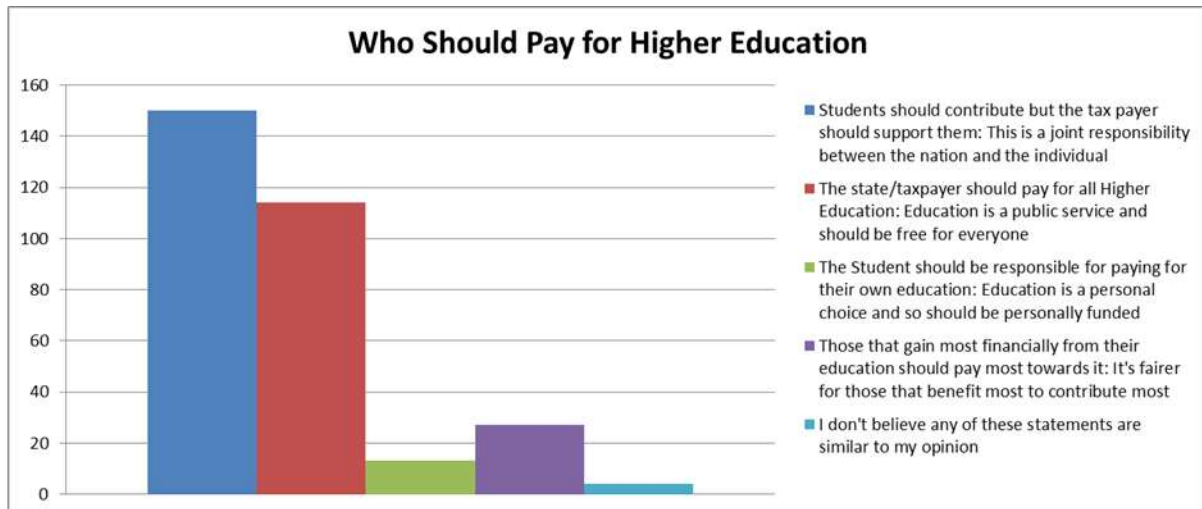
Overall, the data does appear to be useful. But it should be remembered that it



doesn't represent potentially significant perspective at Imperial and that those under-represented groups should be borne in mind when forming a policy.

## How did People Answer?

With a lot of data available, we analysed both what the general consensus was and looked at any shifts in that trend based on faculty, fee status or degree type. Presented below are those results where we have also highlighted such changes in trend as far as possible.



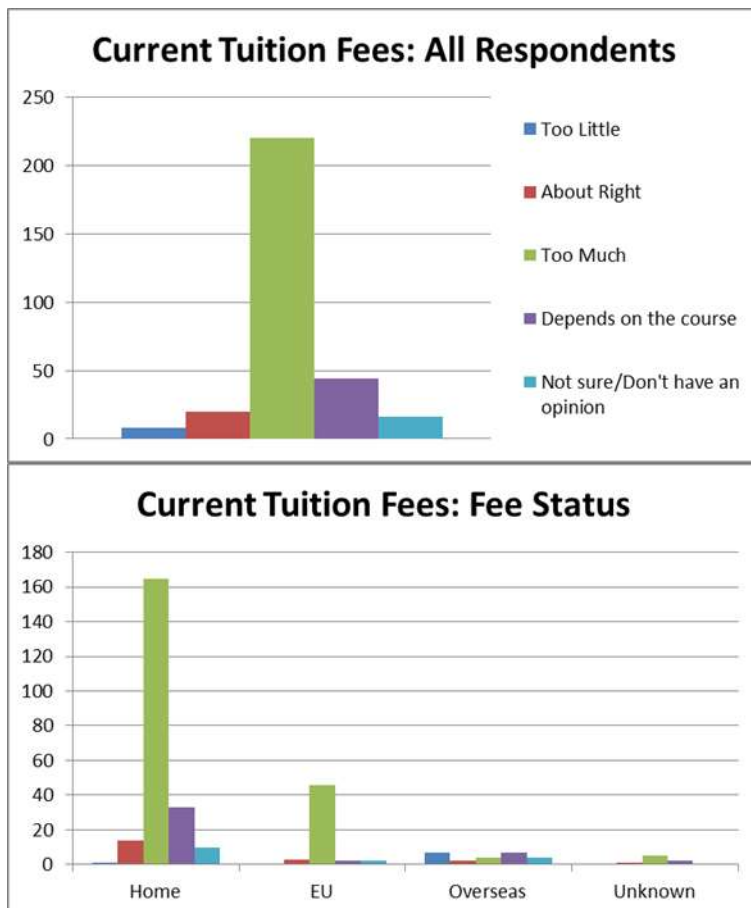


## Issue 1

The first issue we addressed is who should pay for Higher Education. 308 responses to the question were recorded with the two responses in particular being overwhelmingly the most popular. Both of these responses (shown in the graph below) imply that the state should contribute to higher education funding. However, the most popular answer, with 150 selections, implies that Students should contribute to the cost of their Education. This trend appears to be similar for all of the groups. There is no major shift between faculties in particular. One notable exception is Overseas students. While only 24 overseas students responded to the question there was a clear majority in favour of some student contribution, but not the strong second placing for the State/Taxpayer paying for higher education. There was also a different result among the 22 Postgraduate Research students that answered, who preferred State Funding to Joint Student and State funding.

Only one comment particularly addressed this issue, stating that the cost of Tuition fees prohibited taking second or further degree courses. Overseas students mostly addressed a different issue in their comments; that the difference between Home funded students and International student fees was too high. This may reflect a viewpoint that if Tuition Fees are reduced there may be a further increase to already high Overseas tuition fees. One comment also mentioned that while ideally they would like Free-Education for everyone that realistically very few governments were likely to submit to this level of expense.

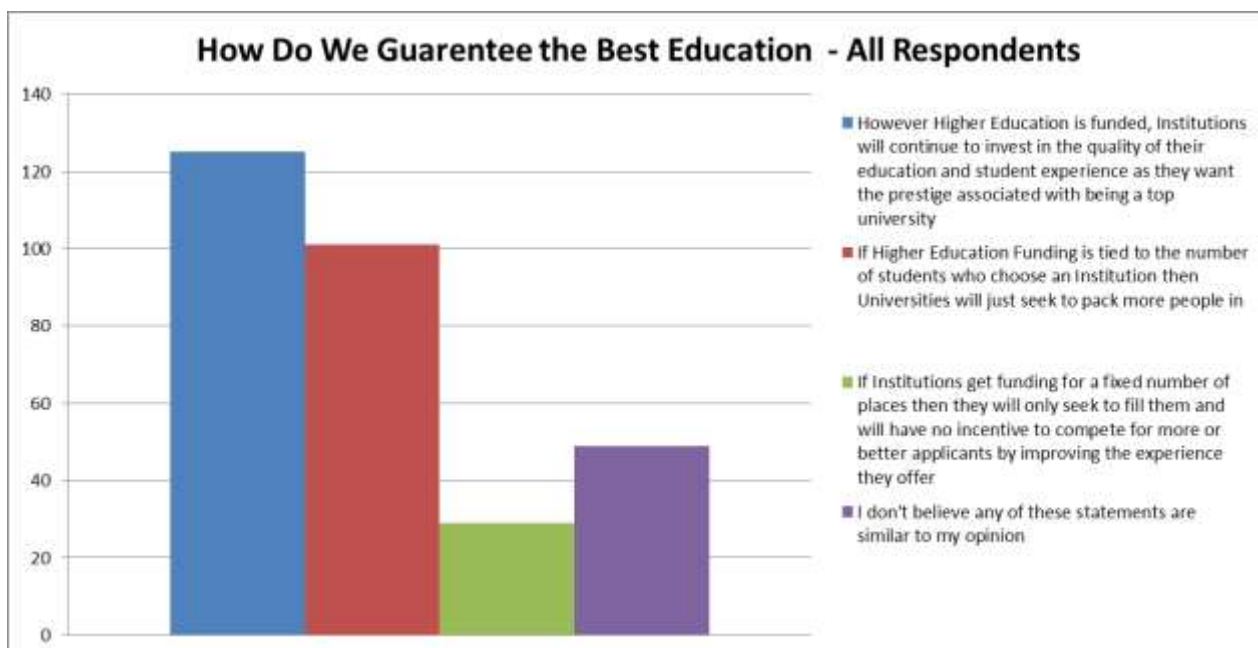
In this section we also asked what people thought about the current level of Home Undergraduate Tuition Fees which at present lie at £9000 per year. As you might expect, the



overwhelming response was that they were too high. This result was shared across every representative group except one. Overseas students had a bimodal distribution with the joint leaders being that £9000 is either 'Too Little' or 'Depends on the course'. This seems in keeping with a feeling of frustration at the fact that Overseas fees are so much higher than that of Home Undergraduates.

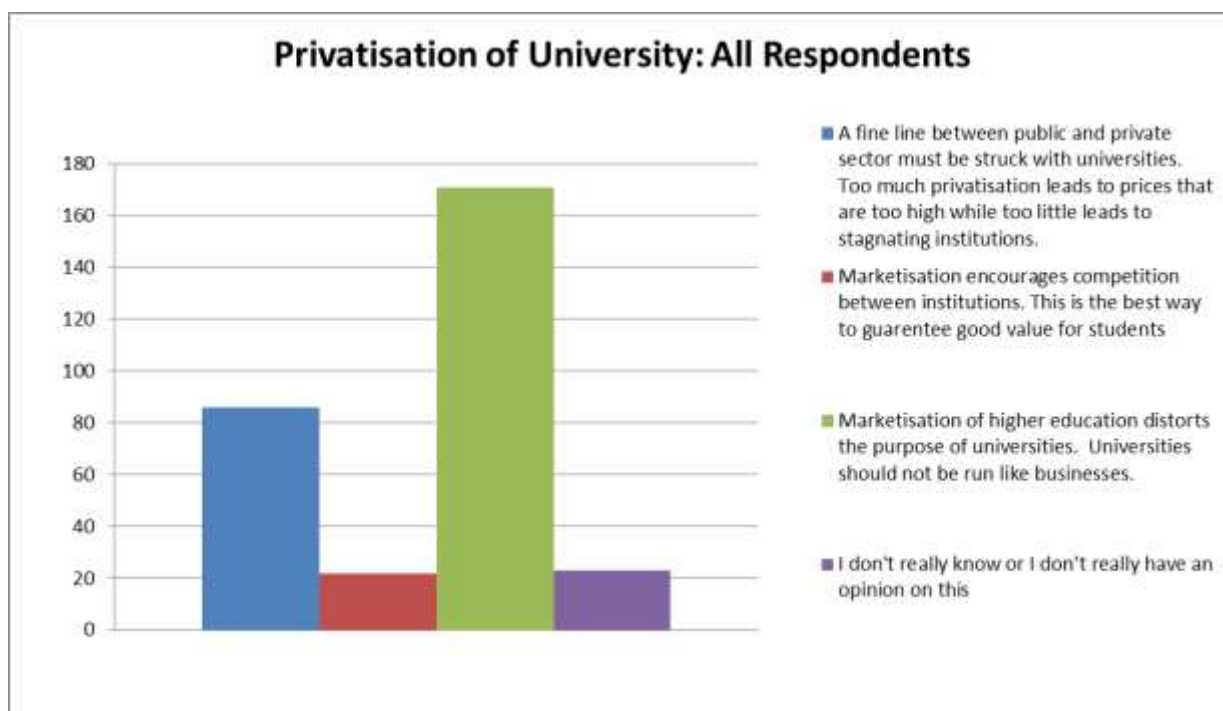
## Issue 2

The next issue that we approached was How we Ensure the Best Education. This was the question with the highest level of uncertainty and the highest rate of negative responses. The free text answers to the issue raised some interesting points. A lot of people



seemed to feel they could not answer the question because different institutions are fundamentally different and there is no one size fits all rule for how they will react. The majority of comments however seemed to be against further (or even the current level of) privatisation of Universities making a number of pertinent and interesting points; for instance pointing out that there are a number of socially beneficial courses that would likely not be funded in a purely private university model and that Universities will seek more and more to target high fee paying Overseas and Masters students if they cannot break even on Home and EU undergraduate fees.

Interestingly, when asked to pick a statement which most matched their opinion regarding the fact that 'Higher Education Funding can intrinsically affect how much institutions strive to offer a great education and student experience' there was a strong bias among all undergraduates towards the statement 'However Higher Education is funded,

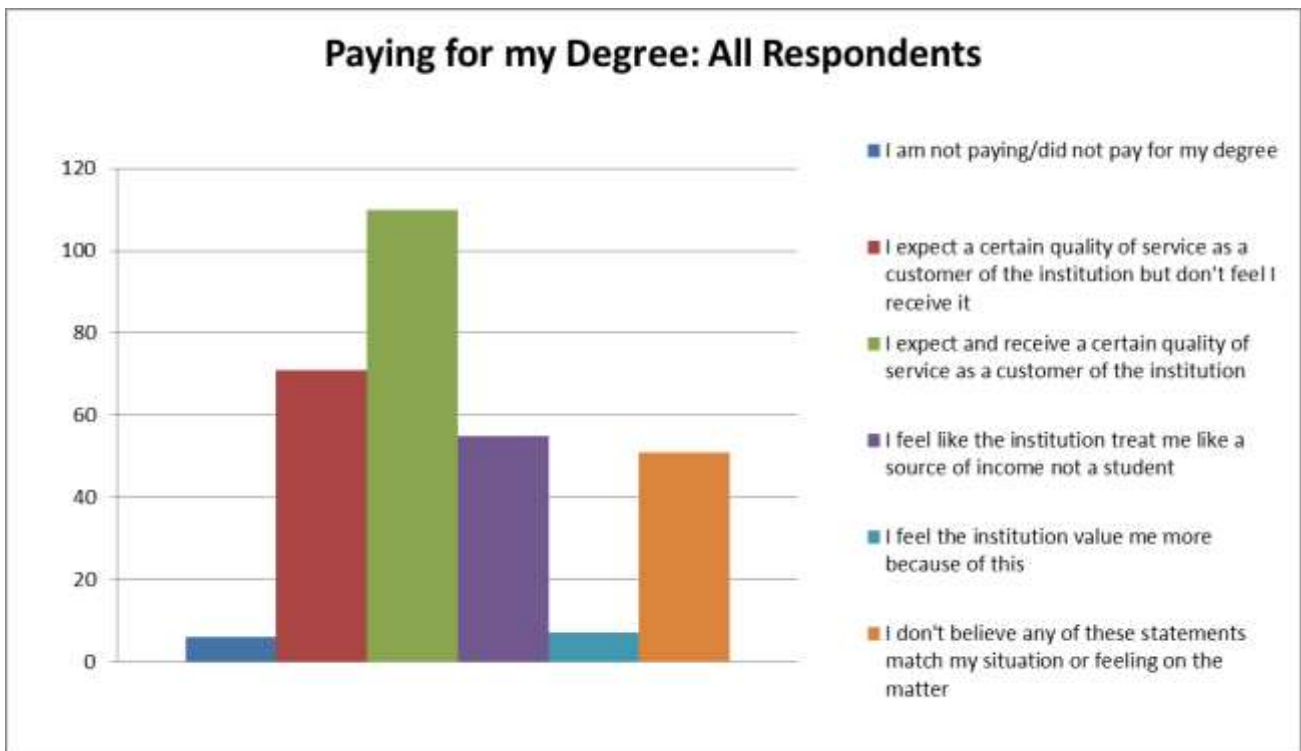
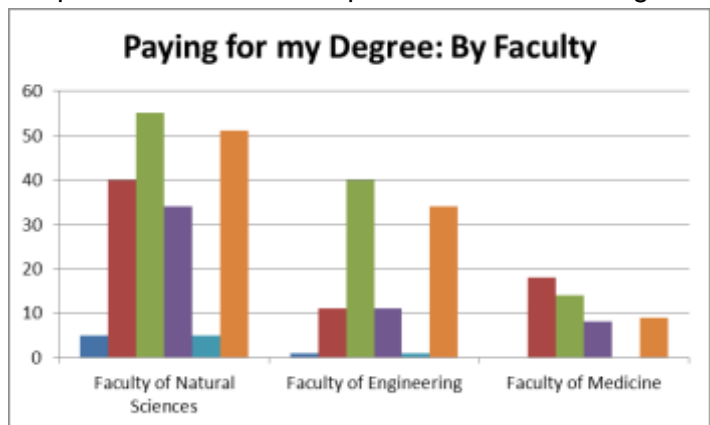


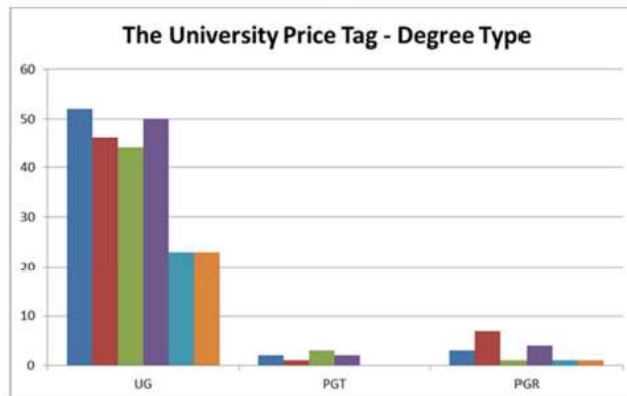
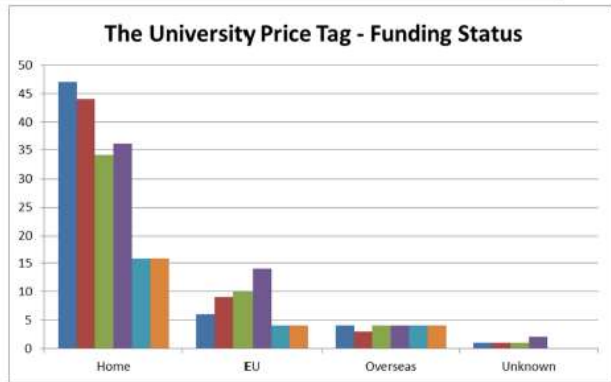
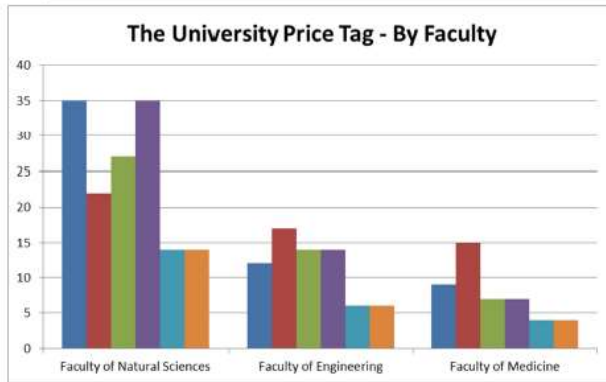
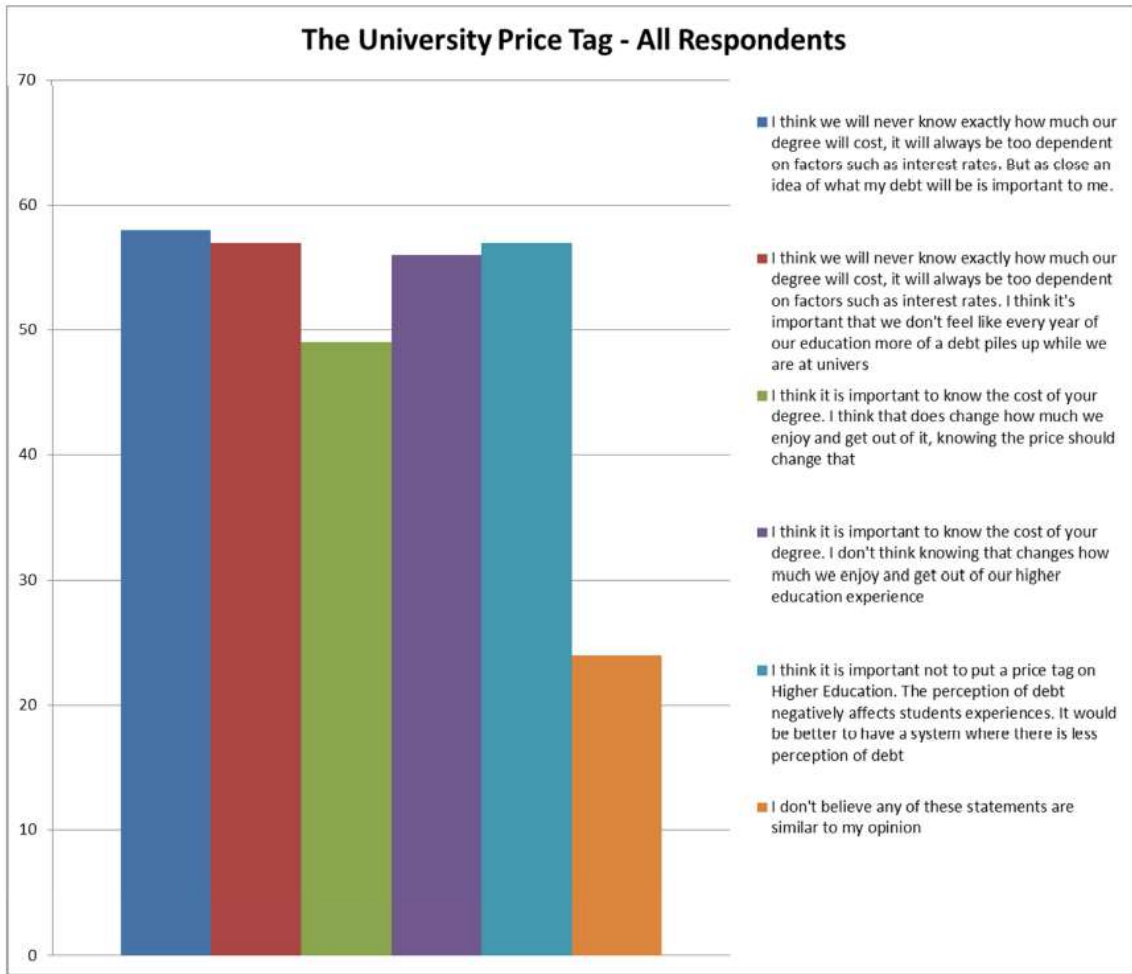
Institutions will continue to invest in the quality of their education and student experience as they want the prestige associated with being a top university'. 125 out of 304 respondents picked this while 101 picked 'If Higher Education Funding is tied to the number of students who choose an Institution then Universities will just seek to pack more people in'. Interestingly very few students primary worry was that 'If Institutions get funding for a fixed number of places then they will only seek to fill them and will have no incentive to compete for more or better applicants by improving the experience they offer'. This trend had good agreement among most respondent groups.

Alongside this we asked more specifically about the marketisation of Universities. Of the 302 responses 171 were firmly in the belief that 'Marketisation of higher education distorts the purpose of universities. Universities should not be run like businesses.' The first question where there has been a clear >50% majority. Interestingly, this degree of polarisation seems to be primarily be Home Students and Undergraduates, particularly from the Faculty of Natural Sciences. While no other group was against this trend others, including the School of Medicine, Overseas Students and Post Graduates all had smaller margins from the second most popular option: 'A fine line between public and private sector must be struck with universities. Too much privatisation leads to prices that are too high while too little leads to stagnating institutions'.

### Issue 3

The final issue we asked questions about was regarding student debt. Particularly the perception of it and how the perceived price tag of a degree affects student attitudes towards their education.





Interestingly, the distribution of opinions for this is nearly flat. With 288 responses the top 5 answers all had between 49 and 58 selections with the top 4 answers only spread between

58 and 56 responses. Perhaps unsurprisingly the trends vary between faculty, funding status and degree type. This seems to indicate that there are genuinely a variety of perspectives within our student body.

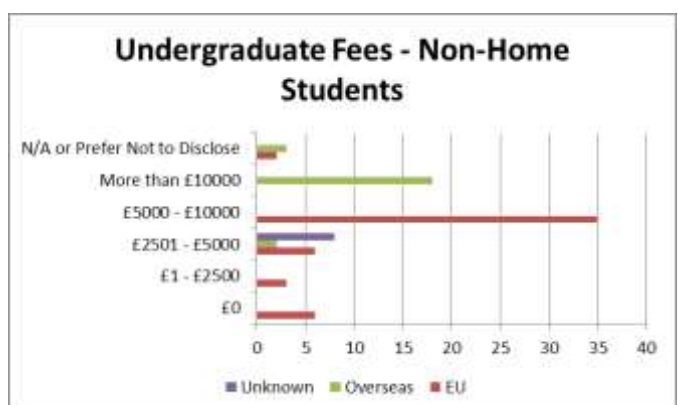
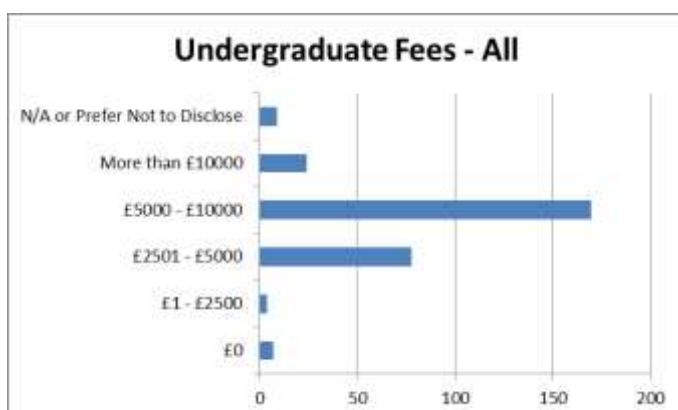
We also asked students how they found paying for their degree made them feel about their degree in light of paying for it. Perhaps surprisingly the majority of students said they 'Expected and Received a certain quality of service' with a second strong but lesser group saying they Expected a certain quality of service, but do not feel they receive it'. Interestingly, Medical Students in particular reverse this particular trend with more feeling that they don't get good quality of service.

### Summary Questions

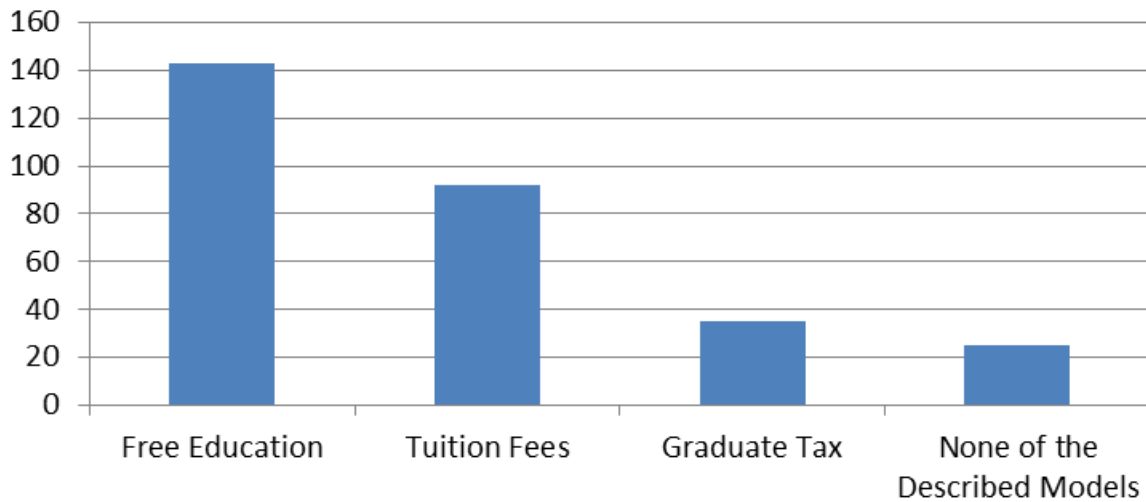
We asked students a few final questions in the Survey. Firstly, to rank the three above issues in an order of priority, secondly what they would like to see as a system of Home EU Fee funding as well as which system should be our current campaign priority and finally, since there are such a variety of different circumstances out there, we asked people what they paid for their undergraduate and first postgraduate degrees. Unsurprisingly, most respondents fell into the £5000 - £10000 category which would include current tuition fees. Though there were a not insignificant number of answers in the £2000 - £5000 category. Of course, most interesting is probably to look at Non-Home students. Where you can see that overseas students had a very high proportion of Over £10000 while EU students responded similarly to Home students. Equally, looking at the Post Graduate results, most of the researchers paid the old fee system and fell into the £2000 - £5000 category while interestingly the group of Taught Postgraduates had a mixture of £0 and £5000-£10000.

Also interesting is students first postgraduate degree where there majority of Research students paid nothing for their first postgraduate degree while taught postgrads seemed to have a mix of £5000 - £10000 and Over £10000.

When asked what funding model we should ultimately be aiming for, just over 140 of the 295 respondents said Free Education. The trend shown in this graph seems to be common across all respondent groups. This is particularly interesting as, despite the fact that Tuition Fees was the second most popular answer this seems to fly completely contrary to what was suggested in Issue 1 – where there seemed to be a clear consensus that, while the state should support Higher Education, the student should contribute. Interestingly, when asked which model they thought should be our first campaign priority the margin by which free education leads is cut significantly. With 288 respondents free education was opted for



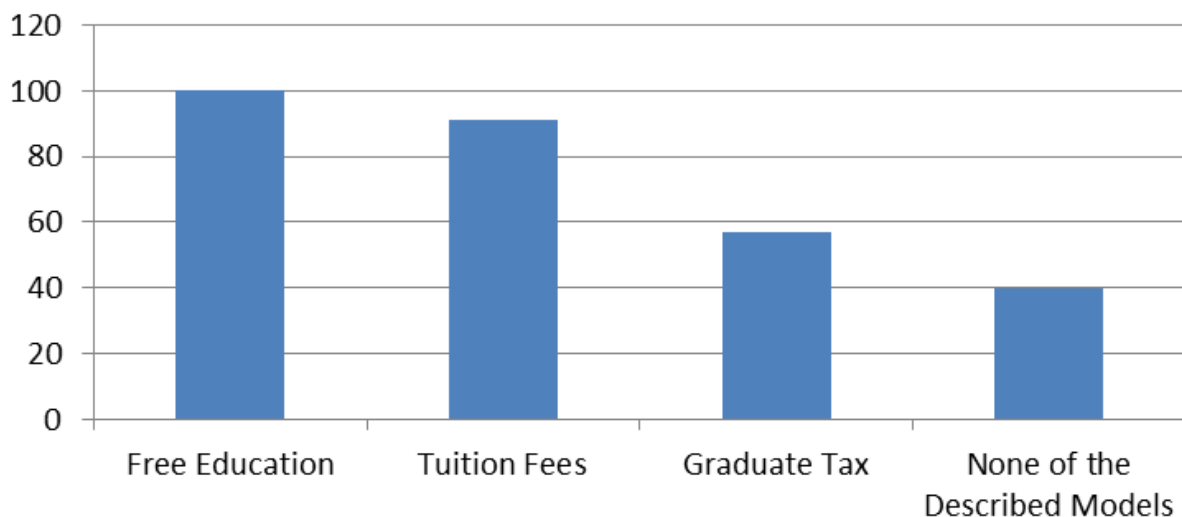
## Ultimately what funding model do you want? - All Respondents



100 times compared to 91 for tuition fees. Again, this seems to have broad applicability as a trend across all respondent groups. It is interesting to see the shift here as it shows there are a number of students that feel a pragmatic approach to campaigning ought to be taken. However, it does not resolve the dichotomy of how to resolve this with responses to Issue 1.

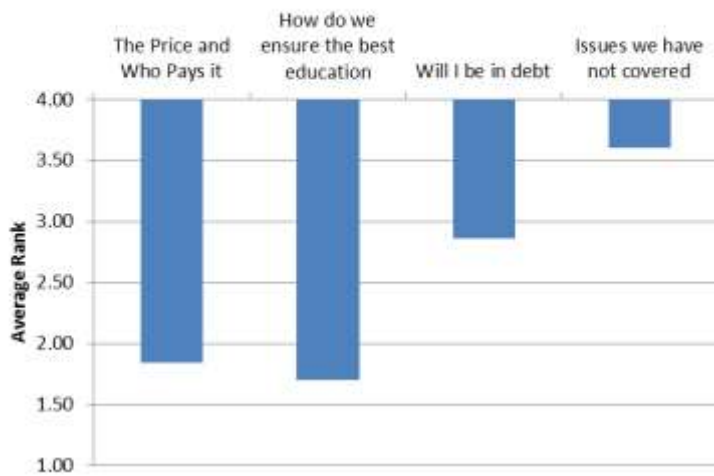
Finally, we look at what order most students placed the three issues in. This is perhaps the most difficult to tabulate effectively. However, by finding the average rank given to each issue we can get a good idea of the order that students feel these issues should be placed in. From the 198 respondents to this question there seemed to be a trend that 'How do we Ensure the best Education' was most important, closely followed by 'The Price and Who Pays it'. Interestingly, respondents from the school of Medicine reversed this trend.

## What Model should be our first campaign priority? - All Respondents





### Which issue is most Important - All Respondents

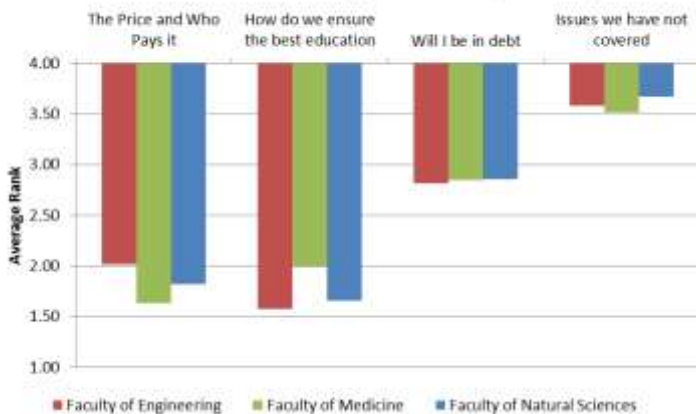


Perhaps because the 6 years of study for a medical degree at Imperial carry with it 50% more years of Tuition Fees than most students or because medical degrees need a large amount of state funding at present in order to be viable. Postgraduate Research students also felt that the Price and who pays it was important. Perhaps because student debt is not usually paid off (in full or in part) during a research based PG degree.

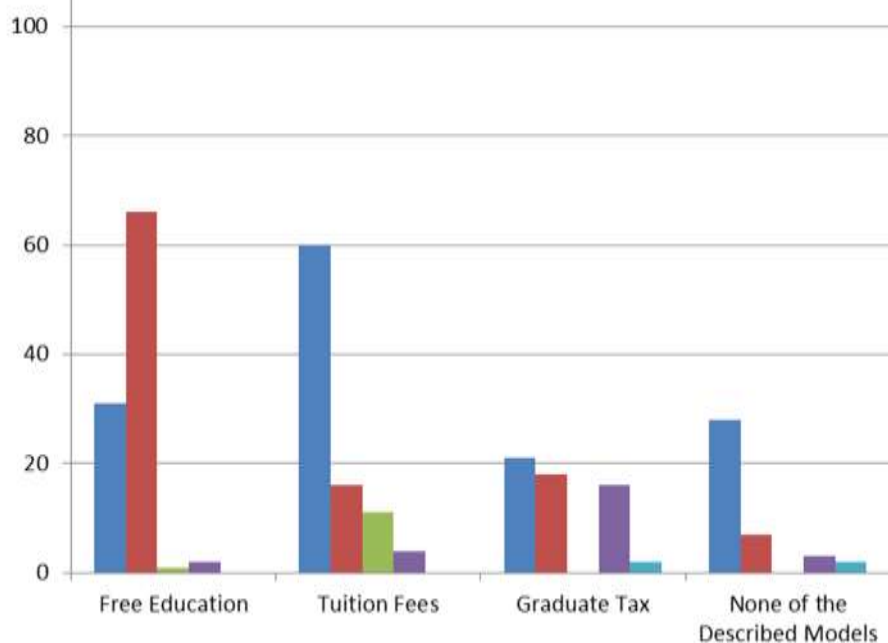
### How do we resolve the 'Student's should contribute' vs. Free Education Problem?

The fact that the general responses to Issue 1 and the models chosen as the ultimate and immediate priorities have such an obvious clash makes it quite difficult to understand what the best approach would be to campaigning. A closer look at the data here could reveal further insights that allow us to understand this seeming contradiction. The data allows us to look at how people that selected various

### Which issue is most Important - By Faculty



### Funding model choices by Issue 1 response



- Students should contribute but the taxpayer should support them: This is a joint responsibility between the nation and the individual
- The state/taxpayer should pay for all Higher Education: Education is a public service and should be free for everyone
- The Student should be responsible for paying for their own education: Education is a personal choice and so should be personally funded
- Those that gain most financially from their education should pay most towards it: It's fairer for those that benefit most to contribute most
- I don't believe any of these statements are similar to my opinion

options in Issue 1 chose when it came to picking a funding model.

It can be seen from this that only those that chose 'The State/Taxpayer should pay for all Higher Education' had a strong bias in favour of Free Education. The most popular choice in Issue 1 was a joint responsibility between the state and the student for the cost of higher education. This group voted strongly in favour of Tuition fees, though their response was less polar than those that chose 'State/Taxpayer funded education'. This trend is roughly duplicated in those that said that the student should be responsible for the cost of their education and no obvious trend was present in the other two groups.

This leads me to believe that there is not a clear enough majority to campaign purely for free education. Especially since this is such a polar group. However, our priorities clearly ought to take some account of this strongly polar – based on the free text comments most of these are responses are based on principal rather than the personal benefit that could be caused by getting free education. We should note, however, that in any survey such as this there will be a bias towards those that feel particularly strongly about the issue in the responses as such we should still consider all of our data with a critical eye to what may be influencing it.

## **What should our stance be?**

The survey data has been very interesting and has, in our belief, broadly fulfilled the objective of gaining in depth information about the views of students. In our stance we should be careful to try to accommodate the views of under-represented student groups at the same time as finding a stance that represents a consensus viewpoint moving forwards. Not only this but, we should try to cover the broad range topics that have been expressed or highlighted through both this survey and the surrounding discussions that have taken place, for instance our commitment to ensuring the Higher Education Sector commits to support widening access to University such that access to Higher Education is never limited by a student's financial background. Perhaps the best place to start this is with the issue that students broadly thought was the most important.

Any proposed funding model should identify how that model will help to ensure Higher Education Institutions offer the best education to students. There is broad agreement from our student population that the further Universities move towards a private sector model the less Student focused education will become and as such we should oppose any steps for government to reduce state funding and force universities to rely on generating revenue. In particular, the level of uncertainty around the solution to this problem; and several free-text comments suggesting no one knows the best funding model for this means we should support any attempt to research or gain data on how Education can be improved or hindered by using a particular funding scheme.

The second most important issue to students was the price of higher education and who pays it. The only student groups that seemed to feel £9000 was an appropriate price for students to pay for higher education were those that already pay much higher than this and while the majority of students felt that it was appropriate for the student to contribute something towards higher education it is clear that an increased amount of state support for higher education is widely supported by respondents. As such, one of our highest priorities



should be reduction of the Tuition Fee as it is strongly felt that the free market model experiment with higher education has failed.

Within this bracket it should be noted that several at risk groups of students raised serious concerns over the high price of postgraduate courses and overseas fees. There also appears to be a financial concern held by students of Medicine who have 6 years rather than 3 or 4 of potential Tuition Liability to contend with. Based on this, we should contain within our policy a section to support regulation of these fees. This should come with a commitment from government to support Universities that train skilled academics to help universities move away from a reliance on unregulated fees to compensate for loss making undergraduate subjects. This is particularly true in STEM subjects.

These goals mean that our broad campaign strategy need not be to tightly tie our colours to the mast of any particular model. We can instead respond to any and all models or ideas that are proposed with our broad principles in mind. However, it seems that there is definitely little support for a Graduate Tax and while there is a strong push by proponents of Free Education the majority of students seem to believe some Student contribution is appropriate. As such we are suggesting support of significantly reduced tuition fees; to be in line with the majority of student opinion. This has the added advantage that it is not at cross purposes to those who did want free education, as it is clearly closer to this than the current system and therefore makes for a good compromise lobbying position which should be closely aligned with the goals of most students.

## **Recommendations**

In order to ensure clarity and completeness here we include the below table which lays out the various principles which the Union supports and commits to marshal its campaign towards achieving as well as more specific objectives and the logic behind these. The campaign need not be completely restricted by these, both as they are achieved and as sensible new objectives become apparent we strongly recommend that the Union is empowered to make reasonable decisions about what is within the scope of these principles to work towards.

Campaign Principle	Target/Objective	Reasoning
<b>Ensure the Best Education Possible</b>	Actively oppose any legislation or proposed model that does not demonstrate that it will cause a positive change to the quality of Higher Education.	Respondents to the survey said that guaranteeing the best education was most important to them. Therefore we should oppose any model that cannot adequately demonstrate that it will foster an improvement to the quality of Higher Education
	Campaign for thorough independent research to be funded to investigate what effect funding models have on the quality of education and which funding models affect this most positively.	Students also showed that there are concerns and a lack of knowledge about what system will encourage such a change, as such we should campaign for comprehensive research to be done into how different models affect the quality of Higher Education
<b>Widening Access/Participation</b>	Campaign to ensure current levels of investment in Outreach and Widening Participation are maintained in real terms by government and institutions independently of any change in Funding Model.	Students in the survey and surrounding discussion have made it clear that a commitment to ensuring that all students regardless of economic background have equal access to higher education
	Campaign to increase the government support, grants and loans available to match the true cost of living.	The survey highlighted that maintenance grants/loans available did not reflect the cost of living, particularly in London and that this is essential, particularly for those that don't have independent means and busy courses that make it difficult to maintain part time work
	Campaign to ensure support for long courses and socially important courses (such as Medicine) is guaranteed by government regardless of changes in other legislation	Medical students in particular highlighted a concern about the cost of degrees. Without funding of these, often expensive, courses they would become inaccessible and lead to a reduction in the number of talented doctors in the country.
<b>Reduce the Marketisation of Higher Education</b>	Campaign to reduce the marketization of Higher Education. This should include but not be limited to opposing any measure of reducing state support for Universities.	The survey has shown overwhelming opposition to the marketization of Higher Education. Therefore this trend should not only be stopped but reversed. Students believe that the current semi-marketised model leads to Institutional Management focused on Revenue rather than Education.
	Campaign to reverse the decision to increase Tuition Fees to £9000 – Returning them to the previous model of £3000 per year	As part of this it, the survey is clear that students feel the current cost of Education is too high. This target of £3000 is only a first objective here as many will also feel that is still too high. It has also been highlighted that pragmatically we should be willing to accept proposals such as a stepped reduction in fees over time if this is more economically viable.
<b>Increase Transparency</b>	Campaign for better reporting of University Finance, particularly to current and prospective Students over and above what is currently required by the Charities Commission	Many Students have mentioned that it is not clear enough how much money Universities make and what they spend money (including Tuition Fees) on.
	Campaign for fees to be fixed for the duration of all courses and not increase or vary year to year. This includes inflationary measures which are often difficult to understand.	There is a concern among students as to how much their degree will actually cost and it not being obvious how fees will change during their time at university.
<b>End the Reliance on PG and Overseas Fees</b>	Campaign for government to impose regulation on Overseas and Post Graduate fees in order to stop inflating unregulated fees being used to	Many free text comments in the survey have highlighted the disparity and expense of Postgraduate and Overseas fees, particularly one year Masters Courses
	Campaign for increased government funding for both post graduate courses (particularly one year masters) and overseas students	Universities need to remain Financially Viable despite this reduction in revenue, as such we support the idea of increased governmental funding for the training of top level researchers through one year masters courses and for attracting overseas students who contribute greatly our economy and and knowledge and skills to our job market.

## Appendix – The Survey

### Page 1 – Introduction

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### Introduction

This survey primarily focuses on Home Undergraduate Fees, but we are keen to find out everyone's views and if you would particularly like to comment on International or Post Graduate fees then please do complete the survey and make use of the free text entry boxes for this.

The survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes and all pages have free text boxes where you can let us know anything else you think might be relevant. When you click 'Next' below the next screen you see will be a University Login, by signing in you consent to us using your registry information to understand various demographics about our respondents including course and fee status information. All of this information will be treated in strict confidence and results will be anonymised.

Many thanks for choosing to participate in this survey and add your voice to the Student Union on this issue.

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### Page2 – Login Screen

## Imperial College London

Username:

Password:

[forgot your password?](#)

use of cookies

# Page3 – Issue 1

## Issue 1 - The Price and Who Pays it

The first issue we are addressing is how much Higher Education is worth and who we believe should be paying for it. The next few short questions should help let us know what your thoughts are on this.

### Who should pay the cost of Higher Education?

Please indicate which of the statements below best aligns with your opinion:

- Students should contribute but the tax payer should support them: This is a joint responsibility between the nation and the individual
- The Student should be responsible for paying for their own education: Education is a personal choice and so should be personally funded
- Those that gain most financially from their education should pay most towards it: It's fairer for those that benefit most to contribute most
- The state/taxpayer should pay for all Higher Education: Education is a public service and should be free for everyone
- I don't believe any of these statements are similar to my opinion

We know there are a lot of different perspectives out there and that often a single statement won't perfectly match what you think. Please let us know how close or different the above statement was to your opinion below:

	Poorly, but Closest Option	Significant Differences	Small Differences	Exactly	No Statements Matched Opinion
How well did the chosen Statement Match your opinion?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Current Home Undergraduate tuition fees are £9000 per year, what do you think about this cost?

	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Depends on the course	Not sure/Don't have an opinion
£9000 is...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is there anything you'd like to add or tell us regarding this issue?

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## Page4 – Issue 2

### Issue 2 - How do we ensure the best education?

The next issue we want to look at is how important ensuring that Higher Education Funding encourages Institutions to offer the best education for students is and how we accomplish that.

Higher Education Funding can intrinsically affect how much institutions strive to offer a great education and student experience.

Please indicate which of the statements best matches your viewpoint:

- If Institutions get funding for a fixed number of places then they will only seek to fill them and will have no incentive to compete for more or better applicants by improving the experience they offer
- If Higher Education Funding is tied to the number of students who choose an Institution then Universities will just seek to pack more people in
- However Higher Education is funded, Institutions will continue to invest in the quality of their education and student experience as they want the prestige associated with being a top university
- I don't believe any of these statements are similar to my opinion

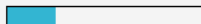
	Poorly, but Closest Option	Significant Differences	Small Differences	Exactly	No Statements Matched Opinion
How well did the chosen Statement Match your opinion?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Movements to higher Tuition Fees have arguably meant a movement towards a more private sector that public sector based University Sector.

Please indicate which of the statements best matches your viewpoint on this:

- Marketisation of higher education distorts the purpose of universities. Universities should not be run like businesses.
- Marketisation encourages competition between institutions. This is the best way to guarantee good value for students
- A fine line between public and private sector must be struck with universities. Too much privatisation leads to prices that are too high while too little leads to stagnating institutions.
- I don't really know or I don't really have an opinion on this

Is there anything you'd like to add regarding this issue?



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**Issue 3 - Will I be in debt?**

Another important issue in this debate is how we feel student debt and the perception of it affects our student experience.

Different methods of funding university put either an exact price tag on each year of Higher Education, other methods do not and depend significantly on salaries. Please let us know which of the following statements best matches your opinion of this issue:

- I think we will never know exactly how much our degree will cost, it will always be too dependent on factors such as interest rates. But as close an idea of what my debt will be is important to me.
- I think we will never know exactly how much our degree will cost, it will always be too dependent on factors such as interest rates. I think it's important that we don't feel like every year of our education more of a debt piles up while we are at university
- I think it is important not to put a price tag on Higher Education. The perception of debt negatively affects students experiences. It would be better to have a system where there is less perception of debt
- I think it is important to know the cost of your degree. I don't think knowing that changes how much we enjoy and get out of our higher education experience
- I think it is important to know the cost of your degree. I think that does change how much we enjoy and get out of it, knowing the price should change that
- I don't believe any of these statements are similar to my opinion

	Poorly, but Closest Option	Significant Differences	Small Differences	Exactly	No Statements Matched Opinion
How well did the Chosen Statement Match your opinion?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In addition to this, we are interested in seeing how the way we pay for our degree affects our perception of it. Please take a look at the statements below and pick the one you feel most applies to you:

- I expect a certain quality of service as a customer of the institution but don't feel I receive it
- I feel the institution value me more because of this
- I feel like the institution treat me like a source of income not a student
- I expect and receive a certain quality of service as a customer of the institution
- I am not paying/did not pay for my degree
- I don't believe any of these statements match my situation or feeling on the matter

It would also be really useful to know how much you paid per year for your undergraduate and or Post Graduate (if applicable) degree

	£0	£1 - £2500	£2501 - £5000	£5000 - £10000	More than £10000	N/A or Prefer Not to Disclose
Undergraduate fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1st Postgraduate fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Is there anything you'd like to add regarding this issue?



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## Page 6 – Summary Questions

### In Summary...

We've touched on quite a number of important issues here. Below, we ask you to consider which of these you think is most important when we decide how Higher Education should be funded as well as asking you if you think there are important issues that we've not covered here. Finally, before we let you get back to your own degree we look at three of the main proposed Higher Education Funding models and ask you which you would support both in an ideal world and in the context of the current situation.

These are the general areas we've touched on. Please let us know which of these you think is most important or any other areas you think we've missed.

- 'The Price and Who Pays It'
- Issues we have not covered
- 'How do we ensure the best education'
- 'Will I be in debt'

Have we missed any issues that are important to you or is there anything else you'd like to inform us of?

From the most recent models that have been proposed for Higher Education Funding we would like to know which you think is most suitable. We would particularly like to know what we should be ultimately aiming for as a model as well as what you think our current campaign priority should be if this is different.

If you would like to know more about any of these models why not take a look at our [HEF Factsheet](#)

	Tuition Fees	Free Education	Graduate Tax	None of the Described Models
Ultimately we should have...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our current campaign objective should be...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there any other models for Higher Education Funding you think would be more appropriate or anything else you would like to tell us?



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## Page 7 – Finished

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**Finished!**

Many thanks for taking part in the survey. If there is anything else you would like to add or feed back then please feel free to add this below. If you would like to contact us directly then please feel free to contact us. Take a look at the [Union contact page](#) or email the [Deputy President \(Finance & Services\) - Alex Savell](#)

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