



House of Commons  
Innovation, Universities,  
Science and Skills Committee

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# **Withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications (ELQs)**

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**Third Report of Session 2007–08**

*Volume I*





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**Third Report of Session 2007–08**

*Volume I*

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## The Innovation, Universities, Science & Skills Committee

The Innovation, Universities, Science & Skills Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

### Current membership

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Mr Tim Boswell (*Conservative, Daventry*)

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Mr Rob Wilson (*Conservative, Reading East*)

### Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental Select Committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No.152. These are available on the Internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

### Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at [www.parliament.uk/ius](http://www.parliament.uk/ius)

A list of reports from the Committee in this Parliament is included at the back of this volume.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are: Dr Lynn Gardner (Clerk); Glenn McKee (Second Clerk); Edward Waller (Second Clerk); Dr Christopher Tyler (Committee Specialist); Dr Joanna Dally (Committee Specialist); Ana Ferreira (Committee Assistant); Camilla Brace (Committee Secretary); and Jonathan Olivier Wright (Senior Office Clerk).

### Contacts

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## Summary

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In September 2007 the Government announced that it was withdrawing state funding paid to higher education institutions to subsidise the fees of ELQ students, that is those studying for a qualification at the same or lower level to one they already hold. The result is that from 2008–09 students starting a second degree could see their tuition fees increase by 200%.

The Government argued that its policy was in line with the recommendations of the Leitch Review of Skills to concentrate the extra resources that it is putting in to higher education on first-time students and expecting employers to shoulder more of the burden for re-training via second degrees.

We found that consultation on the withdrawal of the funding was restricted to the implementation arrangements with the full effects of the changes and consequences for other policies such as the need for re-skilling inadequately examined. We conclude that the decision to cut funding to ELQ students was insufficiently justified either by persuasive analysis of its likely effectiveness in achieving the desired goals or evidence of the likely wider impact of the policy.

Nearly all the submissions we received were hostile to the changes.

We conclude that the transitional arrangements and exemptions are inadequate—for example, the change will affect some groups of students and some institutions more than others—and inconsistent—for example, those pursuing Turkish studies are exempt but not pharmacists. We believe that the change would have been better left until the independent review of variable fees due in 2009, which would have been able to weigh funding of ELQs against other priorities.









































































































