Written evidence submitted by Goldsmiths, University of London, to the Higher Education and Research Bill Committee (HERB 29)

About us

Founded in 1891, Goldsmiths, University of London is an institution with a rich academic history, known for its creative approach. We have 9,000 students at our campus in the heart of south east London's New Cross community, studying undergraduate, postgraduate, teacher training and return-to-study courses in the arts and humanities, social sciences, cultural studies, computing, and entrepreneurial business and management. We are recognised as one of the UK's top creative universities, as voted for by students in the Which? University guides. The Department of Design is rated the best in the UK.

Seven winners of the Turner Prize – and almost a quarter of those shortlisted for the award since it began – have been former Goldsmiths students, while others have gone on to receive Oscars, Mercury Music prizes, Ivor Novello's and BAFTAS. Many of our graduates are among the most distinguished artists in the world today. They include Bridget Riley, Mary Quant, Antony Gormley, Damien Hirst, Mark Wallinger and Vivienne Westwood. We are a research intensive university, with research at the forefront of creative practice, with almost three-quarters of research rated internationally excellent or world-leading by the 2014 Research Excellence Framework.

Summary of key points

1. In 1891, the Goldsmiths' Company's Technical and Recreative Institute opened for 'the promotion of the individual skill, general knowledge, health and wellbeing of young men and women belonging to the industrial, working and poorer classes'.

2. Equality of opportunity remains a core part of our values today. Artist Gary Hume said of his time at Goldsmiths "It was where I was given the opportunity to grow in confidence as an artist and a person and have a chance to thrive rather than be regarded as a bit of a waste."

3. We therefore support the Government's commitment to Social Mobility. We believe that many universities already do excellent and successful work to widen access, including our own with initiatives such as the award winning Open Book which provides routes to Higher Education for those with offending and addiction backgrounds. We believe that robust and effective
access and widening participation plans should be a requirement for all providers of Higher Education – old and new.

4. The latest Government statistics put the value of the creative industries at more than £77 billion, accounting for 5% of the economy. Research shows that the best results in industry come when the arts and sciences work together. Firms that integrate these skills have superior economic performance and increased levels of innovation\(^1\). As the former Chancellor said, "one of the best investments we can make as a nation is in our extraordinary creative industries." It is critical therefore that the Bill recognises the value of the Arts, *on a par* with STEM subjects.

5. Goldsmiths is a very distinctive institution – our practice and research is innovative and we offer unique courses fusing together disparate disciplines. We believe that UK Universities are held in such high esteem the world over because of the diversity of provision and scholarship. The Bill should cater for UK Universities in the broadest sense, preserving diversity rather than creating a uniform and linear sector. Measurements of quality should be inclusive, and take into account different modes of delivery, such as how arts or practice-based degrees are delivered.

6. We work hard to ensure that the student voice is heard at Goldsmiths and our work in this area was praised in our recent Higher Education Review. We became the first institution to include a student representative on the Committee that determines senior staff pay. We therefore welcome the principle in the White Paper that the student should be at the heart of the Higher Education sector. We ask that student representation is plentiful in the new regulatory structures, and that the student voice is listened to as the Bill moves through the parliamentary process. This includes adding sufficient student voices to the Office for Students.

7. There are a number of aspects of the White Paper that do not require legislation but we hope the Bill Committee will consider these too since the implications are far reaching. This includes the Teaching Excellence Framework, the division of research and teaching between Government departments and the implications of BREXIT for student and staff recruitment, retention and mobility and access to funding for research.

Protecting and promoting the Arts – Clause 85 and Clause 2

8. The word ‘Arts’ is almost entirely absent from the Bill. Clause 85 sets out the responsibility for the UKRI, specifically referencing only Science, Technology, Humanities and New Ideas. Clause 102, paragraph 1 explains that Humanities includes the Arts and Science includes Social Sciences.

9. Given the value of the Creative Industries to the economy, the Arts should not be absent from the legislation but explicitly mentioned as Science is.

10. We also believe excluding the word ‘arts’ from the description of the UKRI remit could jeopardise future funding for arts research. We believe this also to be the case for the Social Sciences, which could be overlooked in favour of more traditional science subjects. As well as signaling a commitment to these important disciplines, this would also fully reflect the objectives of the research councils reporting into the UKRI.

11. Clause 66 gives the Secretary of State the powers to give directions to the OfS about funding - or not - particular courses of study. We are concerned that this would give the power to a future Secretary of State to prioritise STEM over Creative Arts subjects. Some arts subjects cost more than the current tuition fee level and this leaves them vulnerable to cuts.

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<th>Proposed amendments</th>
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<td>13. The words ‘Arts’ and ‘Social Sciences’ explicitly referenced in relation to the UKRI functions and provision of research services and appointment of members/role holders. (Clause 85 (1a-e), 99 (2a) and Schedule 9 (5a)). The wording ‘cultural and social’ to be added before matters at Schedule 9 (2,5c)</td>
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<th>The Teaching Excellence Framework</th>
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<td>15. The proposed Teaching Excellence Framework does not offer an inclusive framework for evaluating excellence in teaching. It does not cater for the diversity of provision within HE in the UK.</td>
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16. The way in which Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences subjects are taught make it problematic to apply metrics designed for other subjects. Our Design courses for instance, rated the best in the country, has studio based learning and peer-to-peer learning as well as formal contact with tutors and this would
not necessarily be reflected in the current measurement around contact hours.

17. Similarly, the measurement of graduate employment does not reflect the journey that creative graduates take. Moira Buffini, now one of the UK’s leading scriptwriters, says she did not start earning until she was 35. She said of her career after graduation "time is essential. You have to make mistakes and get good at your craft."²

18. Within the White Paper there is a narrow and outdated view of what can be considered ‘graduate employment’. Many of our own graduates, and particularly those from creative degrees, will be self-employed or working in non ‘graduate-jobs’ while they grow their creative portfolio. Under the current yardstick, any number of our most famous graduates – Mary Quant, Damien Hirst, Alex James from Blur – would not feature as having secured suitable graduate employment immediately after graduation. John Cale recalls moving to New York ‘penniless’ and working in a book store while he pursued his music career in the evening.³

Proposed amendments

19. There should be a much longer and wider consultation on the metrics used in the TEF. Particular consideration should be given to the application of the metrics to practice-based courses.

20. We need to review how and when graduates are asked about their employment after university. This will build a more accurate picture of whether they have secured employment that meets their career plans.

Link between teaching and research – Clauses 1, 51 and 85

21. We believe that the very best teaching is informed by research and scholarship and is an expectation of students. The Higher Education Academy reports that almost 60% of students believed academic staff should

³ https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/oct/12/john-cale-diversity-survey-goldsmiths-create
be actively contributing to their subject knowledge.  

22. The integral link between research and teaching is undermined in this Bill and in the decision to split the responsibilities between two government departments DfE and BIS.

23. Providing teaching informed by scholarship should be a requirement for new providers and the Office for Students and the UKRI should work closely together to promote this link.

Proposed amendments

24. Clause 85 (1) – addition of ‘collect, disseminate and advance best practice in research-led teaching’ to general duties for OfS

25. Clause 1 - addition under General Duties for the OfS to work with the UKRI on enhancing research-led teaching

26. Clause 51 (2) – additional requirement added that the University Title can only be used where institutions provide teaching that is informed by research and scholarship.

Widening participation and social mobility – Clause 12

27. While increased focus on access and participation is to be welcomed, the government must do more to address the persistent barriers to higher education for those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. This must include better support for and promotion of part-time and mature study to address the decline in this area since fees were introduced.

28. The current access agreements will be replaced by access and participation plans as a condition of registration for providers wishing to charge tuition fees higher than the basic cap (currently £6,000). We believe that there should be an extension of the requirement for access and participation plans to cover all registered providers in receipt of public funding for teaching.

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Proposed amendments

29. Clause 12 amended so that it is clear that all partners be required to submit access plans

Student voice in the Office for Students – Clause 2, 14, 59, 67

30. We are concerned that the proposed Office for Students (OfS) will become a government-led body, rather than one which reflects the real interests of students or staff. In particular, we note the absence of information within the Bill and White Paper on its governance structure.

31. In order to reflect the diversity of the Higher Education system, we call for proper student and staff representation on the main governing body of the OfS, and increased consultation with the higher education workforce on key elements of the regulatory framework.

Proposed amendments

32. Clause 2 to include more robust stipulations concerning the governance structure of the OfS and to include at least one representative from the academic workforce and from the NUS.

33. We would also like a specific reference to consultation with staff and student representatives on the OfS duties outlined in Clauses 14, 59 and 67.

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