

This material was extracted from a document which listed manifesto commitments of the Scottish Labour, Scottish Conservative, Scottish Green, Scottish Liberal and Scottish National Parties.

Conservative Party

Manifesto link: http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Scottish-Conservative-Manifesto_2016-DIGITAL-SINGLE-PAGES.pdf

Key Pledges:

- Supporting the best high achieving graduates interested in getting into teaching via the postgrad route, especially in STEM subjects, by introducing a postgraduate teaching bursary, which would be retention-linked to Scottish state schools
- Every university in Scotland is telling us it needs more money if they are to remain internationally competitive, widen access, provide improved support for bursaries and be able to stay at the cutting edge of research and knowledge exchange. This money could be found wholly from public spending – like cutting college funding even further – or from increased taxation. There is, however, a third option. Scottish Conservatives believe the answer is a modest graduate contribution, payable once the graduate is earning a good salary rather than an upfront fee. Setting the graduate contribution at £1,500 per year would allow us to raise around £100 million by the end of the Parliament and in the years after. We would keep exemptions in place for part-time, postgraduate, disabled and low income students and the contribution would not be payable until the graduate is earning at least £20,000.
- Aligning existing loans with this [£20,000] threshold would be a progressive move, helping the poorest students the most. Evidence from around the world shows that a graduate contribution not only unlocks more funding, but can in fact help with widening access by providing more bursaries and more places for the most disadvantaged students
- We will support plans to give full bursaries to care experienced young people
- We will also do everything we can to support the autonomy of the higher education sector, resisting any political interference, just as we have done during the SNP's most recent legislative proposals
- We recognise the importance of the Open University for students who require a more flexible approach and we would therefore protect the part-time fee grant.

Labour

Manifesto link: <http://www.scottishlabour.org.uk/manifesto/all>

Key pledges:

- Set up a Care Leavers' Higher Education Fund which will replace existing loans with a non-repayable grant of £6000 over and above current support;
- Maintain free tuition;
- Implement in full the CoWA recommendations;
- Commitment to protect education spending;
- Increase threshold for repaying loans to £22K and 'extend the repayment period for student loans to 30 years';
- 'Reverse the SNP's shameful cuts to the bursaries of poorer university students.